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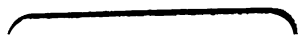
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A CHANGE
AND
MANY A CHANGE.

"A change there has been, and many a change ;
"Faces and footsteps and all things change."

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A CHANGE AND MANY A CHANGE.

alternately on the heads of its three young occupants. The eldest was a dark girl of eighteen; the two others were fair: one with rich golden hair, the other with wavy brown; and neither had, as yet, numbered seventeen summers. They were all three busily occupied; Beatrice, the eldest, was copying some music, and the two others were drawing. There was little conversation, for their thoughts were concentrated on their several employments. There was a ring at the door; and a minute afterwards the servant announced "Miss Herbert."

"Oh, Ida!" cried the golden-haired Lottie, "I am so glad to see you. I was just thinking of you. You know the old proverb, 'Think or speak of a certain person and he is sure to appear.'"

"No, now that is not at all complimentary," returned Ida, kissing her. "You should say, 'Speak of an angel and you will hear the rustle of his wings.' That is much prettier: is it not, Miss Curlywigs?" turning to Fanny.

"Decidedly! and more poetical, too; so I shall adopt it in future: that is 'a wrinkle' for me, as you always say. But do sit down and tell us the news."

"Yes," interrupted Beata, "I want to know

how the pic-nic is getting on ; how many people are going, and will there be any dancing ?”

“ Which question am I to answer first ?” asked Ida, laughingly. “ I will begin with the last. We have hired old Matthew the fiddler, and we shall have a glorious dance, I hope. There will be, I think, about forty people : several are coming from Longleigh, the other side of the downs. Oh, I hope it will be a fine day !”

But while they are chatting on merrily with their friend, I must tell you something of the three young girls before us ; for you must not imagine that they are sisters. Beatrice Lennox was the daughter of a gentleman whose business obliged him to pass most of his time abroad. His family consisted of three sons and two daughters, and they lived near the large town of Monckton, in Dorsetshire. Beatrice, the younger of the two girls, was very delicate, and it was decided that she must live for a year or two in some warm place by the sea-side. She therefore entered the family of Mr. Scott, a lawyer, living at the little village of Herndale, on the English Channel ; and she had been there for two years at the time my story begins : those two years had passed very happily and quietly away, in

studying, riding, walking, and in the society of her two young friends. Fanny Powell was the daughter of a Welsh clergyman. She had only one brother, who was much older than herself; and, as may be imagined, she was a little spoilt. The life and soul of the home in the little mountain village, bright as a sunbeam and merry as a cricket, no one ever crossed her will; and fortunate was it that her disposition was too good to be spoiled. Fearing that their darling child would suffer from being so much indulged, Mr. and Mrs. Powell resolved to send her from home, to finish her education. In early life Mr. Powell and Mr. Scott had been at College together, and still corresponded; so the former applied to his old friend, asking him if he would receive Fanny to be educated with his daughter. The result was, that Fanny Powell was installed as a member of Mr. Scott's household, which consisted of two boys and a girl; the boys, Charlie and Ernest, were abroad at school, and Lottie Scott had masters at home. The two years that had passed had done much towards improving the characters of the three young girls; Beata, gentle and quiet, with dove-like eyes, and low, sweet voice, like the murmurings of distant waters, had softened the high spirit

of Fanny, and had instilled somewhat of her sweetness into both. She was one of those gentle beings whose very footsteps seem to breathe of love and kindness, and whose whole lives consist in a thorough forgetfulness of self, in contributing to the comfort of others, and who shed everywhere around them a spirit of light and gladness. How many may not be influenced by the power of a loving and gentle mind, and how powerful is the force of example! Do not let us think that, because our lot in life is only a common one, and we ourselves seem but of little consequence, that our influence can harm no one: but little do we know the many that we are influencing, and probably shall not, until the last great day; and if we cause a brother to step aside, ever so little, from the narrow but heavenward track, what will be our feelings then? "Kind words awaken kind echoes," is a beautiful saying; and how often have we not an opportunity of finding its truth! A kind look, or even a smile, costs nothing; and yet how often do they seem like balm to a worn and sorrowing heart! Let us strive, then, to lead such a life, that we may be an example to others, "a city set on a hill which cannot be hid," a burning and a shining light.

Verily life is "a sacred burden," and it should be borne solemnly.

"Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin,
But onward, upward, till the goal you win."

But to return to my story.

"I have some news to tell you, Ida dear," said Fanny, after they had talked a long time about the projected pic-nic to Carlingsford Castle. "I had a letter from home to-day, and what do you think? Harold is coming! Isn't it immensely jolly? You know I was to leave soon, so Harold is coming to fetch me; for I am far too precious to travel to Wales alone: some one would be sure to run off with me, and then . . . I dare not think of the number of advertisements and rewards, &c. &c."

"I never saw any one like you, Fanny," said Beata, interrupting her; "you would talk for hours about nothing at all, I do believe."

"I do not see very well how I am to perform that feat as long as you are by me to interrupt me in all my pet speeches. Isn't it a shame, Ida? directly I begin to be the least imaginative or poetical, in comes Beata with her put-down speeches! Bah! I wouldn't be so matter-of-fact for something. I tell you always, you darling," she went on, whilst kissing her, "if you

were poetical you'd be perfect : it only wants that little finishing stroke to your character to make you the grandest woman of the age you live in."

"And yet you always say that you hate perfect people ; so I think I would rather be as I am than lose your love."

"Beata complimentary ! That is something new ! It was what people call 'a very prettily-turned sentence.' But I must to business, friends," she continued,—“I never finished my news : Harold is coming to-morrow, so that he will be in time for the pic-nic ; and Mrs. Scott said that he must stay here a little time. Isn't it kind of her ?”

"Very kind ; and I dare say you are very pleased," said Ida. "But I really must go ; I have been here more than an hour, so good-bye. I suppose I shall not see you till the day after to-morrow, so mind you are in time. We all meet at twelve o'clock, remember. By-by."

And away she ran down the road, and was soon out of sight. A good-tempered face peeped round the door at the girls, who were talking and laughing rather noisily, and a merry voice inquired the meaning of all this "hubbub."

"Why, papa dear," said Lottie, "how can we be quiet when there is to be such a jolly

pic-nic the day after to-morrow? We are all nearly crazy at the thought of it."

"Little things amuse little minds," remarked Mr. Scott, laughingly.

"Now you know as well as possible, you tiresome papa, that you are looking forward to it quite as much as we are. I hope it will be fine; do you think it will, papa dear?"

"Certainly, dear, if it does not rain," Mr. Scott answered.

"Papa, how you delight in teasing me!"

"I will go and see what the glass says for himself," said Fanny; and away she rushed (for she never walked quietly if she could help it) into the hall, to look at the weather-glass. "I prophesy that it will be a very fine day, for the glass stands so high!" she exclaimed, with a beaming face, on returning; and humming a galop, she danced round the room, till she suddenly brought herself to a stand-still before Mr. Scott.

"You little madcap," he said, stroking her hair, "I wonder if you will ever be steady! I think it will take a great deal of sorrow and care to make you quiet, and not so like a kitten running after its tail."

"Oh, some day you will see me with a face a yard long, and with a stately step walking to

meet you, instead of running. Oh, dear, I shall be very much changed then !”

He looked down tenderly into her face, and said, more to himself than to any one present, “God grant that you may never have much care or trouble, dear child, for I do not think you could bear it.”

“Why not ?” asked Fanny.

“Because you are not self-relying enough ; you depend so much on other people.”

“But I can’t depend on myself, for I always feel when I do that I am trusting to a broken reed. I always like to have other people’s opinion. However,” she continued, seriously, “if I ever do have trouble, I trust that strength will be given me to bear it as I ought.”

“Yes, dearest, it will, I do not doubt. But tell me,” he went on, “when does your brother come ?”

“To-morrow, by the evening coach. How I wish it were the time!—tum-ti, tum-ti,” and she was away again dancing, and leaving Mr. Scott still thinking of her words, until the last echo of her light footsteps had died away.

Light-hearted little thing as she was, few would have imagined the depth of thought, and trusting faith and love, that lay hidden in that child-like form, or the support she would

be in the hour of need. She had always been treated as a fondly-loved child, the pet and joy of the household, and as such she could not think she possessed those qualities of firmness and endurance which she admired in others : but they only slumbered, and needed the touch of affliction to bring them out in their real beauty : like the beautiful flower which yields a perfume only when crushed.

But I do not wish you, dear reader, to think that Fanny is perfection. No, no ; she is no heroine, who always does just what is right, and at exactly the right time : she is human, and as such is liable to human failings. Her education and associations had given her a deep feeling, which I can hardly call religion ; for she was not a real, earnest Christian : but she was earnestly praying, and striving to become one ; and to keep in that narrow, beaten track, which at last leads the pilgrim to the desired haven. The prayer seems long before it is answered ; but an answer will come at last, Fanny : so pray on, nothing doubting.

CHAPTER II.

"HERE it is coming, and that is him on the top! Don't you see?—the one with the wide-awake. Oh, you dear old Harold!" And she ran down the steps to meet her brother as he descended from the coach. He was a tall, gentlemanly-looking man, of about two-and-twenty; with bright blue eyes and wavy hair, like his sister's. He kissed her affectionately, and then went to speak to Mr. and Mrs. Scott, who were on the lawn ready to welcome their visitor. After the usual questions about the journey, &c., Fanny said, "Harold, dear, I must introduce you to Lottie and Beata."

"I have heard a great deal of you both," he said, while shaking hands with them; "my sister constantly speaks of you in her letters, and I am glad to make the acquaintance of friends who have been so kind to her."

"Fanny, dear, you had better show your

brother his room," interrupted Mrs. Scott; "tea will soon be ready, and then you can talk as much as you like."

"May we have it out of doors? Do say yes, it is such a lovely evening."

Mrs. Scott nodded her acquiescence; and in about a quarter of an hour they had all assembled beneath the elm-tree, and were talking and laughing, and eating very busily. After tea they went down on the shore for a walk, where they met Ida Herbert, who joined their party, and returned with them to Lillbrook Cottage. The evening passed pleasantly and happily away. The three girls sang and played well, as did also Miss Herbert; and Harold had a glorious bass voice, so deep and rich, and yet so soft and tender.

"Oh, how much we shall miss you two girls!" exclaimed Mrs. Scott. "I am sure I do not know how we shall get on without you. Do you know, my dear," she said, turning to her husband, "Beata says that she must leave us next week?"

"Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it. What obliges you to go so soon? I was hoping you would stay a month or two longer."

"I had a letter from mamma to-day, and she said that as Jenny was going abroad to

Germany, she wished me to accompany her. Papa will take us, as he goes to Turkey."

"How long do you mean to remain?"

"About six months, I think. Mamma knows a German lady at Bonn, with whom we are to live, and who is to travel with us."

"How I envy you!" exclaimed Lottie; "and how dull I shall be without you and Fanny! Oh, dear, I hope you will come and see me, Ida, or I am sure I shall get hypochondriacal."

"Oh, certainly: I will do the best I can to cheer you," answered Ida; "but I am afraid bad will be the best. But let us not think of parting until the time comes: so go and sing that pretty new song of yours, like a good girl."

At ten o'clock they all separated, and many heads peered out into the twilight of the summer night to judge what weather it would be on the morrow.

"Fine, I think," said Mr. Scott, as he drew down the window-blind. And so it was: the sun shone brightly, and the birds sang gaily, as the carriage containing Mr. and Mrs. Scott, the three girls and Harold, dashed along the road to the Castle; away past the little lake, into which the willows bent their graceful branches, and which reflected the blue sky, cloudless and

unruffled as its own bosom; through the elm avenue; then on up the hill, from whence you had a splendid view of the sea dancing in the sunlight, and of the rocky coast, which spread for miles and miles away into the blue distance. On the other side rose the downs, fresh and green in their summer beauty, and across these our friends must pass. At last, before them rose the old Castle, with its ivy-covered battlements, massive gateway, and deep moat; and in a few moments they had alighted from the carriage, and were in the midst of a merry group.

"The dinner is to be laid in the old courtyard," said Ida Herbert, after the general greeting was over. "Come, Beata, and help us lay it out." And away they ran, and were soon deep in the discussion of whether it were better to put the veal pie at the top or bottom of the cloth, and so on; while the younger girls gathered flowers and ferns to decorate the dishes.

"'Much against my will, I am bidden to call you to dinner,'" said Ida, coming out to those who were awaiting the summons, and meanwhile sunning themselves on the slope.

"Why against your will, Miss Herbert?" asked Harold.

"Because I think it a pity that anything so pretty should be destroyed. Look, now, does it not look nice? and then, in a few minutes there will not be a vestige left of all our skill and care!"

"All things bright and fair must fade," said Harold; "and I suppose the cooks would not feel very much flattered if the people were only to stand and stare at the viands which they have dressed."

"Now make yourself useful, Mr. Harold," said Fanny, running up; "there's no time for you and Ida to stand there flirting."

The dinner was much the same as others of the kind. I will not trouble you with a description of it; no doubt, dear reader, you can fill it up for yourself. You have some recollections of sunny days passed in the merry greenwood, or among some picturesque ruin—days which stand out as a bright spot in your memory. Just such a day was the one I am writing of; a bright, free, merry day, with plenty of laughing at others' mishaps—aye, and plenty of flirting, too. At tea-time they all reassembled, and then began what the young people had been looking forward to,—the dancing. Old Matthew the fiddler, perched on an old ruined wall, played away right merrily; whilst the dancers whirled

and twirled through the galop and waltz, or walked through the stately formal quadrille and lancers.

"Where is Fanny?" anxiously asked Mrs. Scott of Beata: "have you seen her?"

"No, I have not for a long time. The last thing I saw her do, was to run up the steps of the keep with Connie Hythe: perhaps she is there now; I will go and see."

"I will accompany you," said Harold Powell, with whom she had been dancing. "I must go and see if my wild sister has committed suicide by hurling herself headlong down."

Ah! it is well for you, Harold, to pretend an anxiety for your sister—you, who know her wandering habits so well, and that at that present moment perhaps she was only lost in rapture at the contemplation of some grand old ruin. I very much question if you would have gone if Beata had stayed below.

They have arrived at the top, and look abroad over the lovely country that lies in the uncertain light of the setting sun. Overhead the clouds are floating, catching their varied hues from the great orb that is fast disappearing behind the down, to the west; away to the east they gaze out on the far-off deep-blue sea, while merry voices, and peals of laughter are borne

up to them from the court-yard below. They stood there for a long time talking, while leaning over the battlements, and quite forgetting all else in the charm of each other's conversation. By and by the moon, "pale empress of the silver night," rose from the sea; and then, how vividly did the words of Byron come to their mind!

"And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and filled up,
As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries,
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship," &c.

For a time the scene seemed too beautiful even for words; but afterwards they talked of old ruins in general, and this one in particular, until Beata suddenly remembered Fanny.

"What shall I do? I have quite forgotten Fanny!" she exclaimed.

"Oh! she is sure to be quite safe; for she often wanders like this, and does not even care to be disturbed. She likes to go alone, and look at anything she saw when with her companions, and which pleased her. And besides,

I want you to look at the shadows of the trees: Are they not beautiful? And how lovely that old ivy-covered doorway looks!"

Harold then talked of Wales, its beautiful scenery, its wild and rugged mountains, and his own mountain-home. And so happily did the time pass, that they were quite astonished when, on descending, they found all assembled, and ready for departure, with the exception of Fanny and Constance Hythe: they went in all directions to find them; and at last Miss Fanny and her friend appeared, laughing at what they called their adventure.

"Such fun we have had, Beata dear!" she exclaimed, going up to her. "We went to the wood, a little way from here, and we came to such a lovely little brook; and as we were rather warm, we sat down beside it; and then we took off our shoes and stockings, and walked about in it; and then it began to grow dark, and we went the wrong way, and lost ourselves; and we thought we should be like the children in the wood, and that you would discover us to-morrow, covered with leaves; only, fortunately, we heard your voices, and were saved from that melancholy catastrophe."

"Don't be such a monkey!" was Beata's laughing reply. "But have you seen Lottie?"

Fanny nodded her head knowingly, and said, "I think she has lost herself also: but never mind, she has some one to take care of her, and is not 'a hunprotected female,' like Connie and I were. It is my opinion that some people are in love with some people." And with this wise and pithy remark she departed, leaving Beata to wonder what she meant. In a few moments Lottie returned, accompanied by a young man from Longleigh, and was instantly assailed by Fanny with the exclamation of, "Would I be such a little flirt? No, not for worlds!"

"Now, don't chaff me," answered Lottie. "I dare say you are quite as bad."

"Am I? Well, Connie to-day has been my young man; and I'd a great deal rather have her than that stupid, insipid Mr. Stone."

"He is a very nice man, and you shan't say a"

"There, there! I don't want to argue with you. I dare say *you* find him delightfully agreeable, charming, and a variety of other adjectives; but, you know, 'what is one man's meat is another man's poison:' so you may keep Mr. Stone for me. I assure you I have not one atom of romance in my composition;

so you will find no sympathy from me." And she turned away laughing.

In a few minutes they were all in the carriage. "Good night," said every one; and away they rolled. There was not much talking going home, for they were all tired from the day's exertion; and even Fanny was quiet, and seemed lost in thought: though of what she was thinking, none knew. I doubt if she knew herself: though she could think, and deeply, too; for beneath her merry exterior there beat a loving, honest, and noble heart.

CHAPTER III.

THE days that followed, passed pleasantly along, too quickly for all parties. The mornings were spent in rambling on the sea-shore, or in excursions to the many lovely places in the vicinity. Those little homely pic-nics, as Fanny called them, were very enjoyable: to sit on the downs, and feel the fine fresh air fanning their cheeks, and look at the glorious view of the ever-changing sea, that glittered and shone in the sunlight, and listen to the song of the bird and hum of the insect, were pleasure and luxury enough, even without the addition of loving and beloved companions. And in the afternoon, when it was too warm to walk, they would all sit beneath the elm in the garden by the tiny brooklet, which kept up a running accompaniment to their conversation; and the girls would work, while Harold read aloud. It was two or three evenings before the day fixed

for their departure, and they were all sitting in the cool shade, while Harold was reading some of Longfellow's poems. Occasionally he stopped to talk about the piece he was reading, and in one of these pauses Mr. and Mrs. Scott joined the group.

"So, so! you are reading poetry to young ladies! Very dangerous work! Don't you find it so?" said Mr. Scott, merrily. "What are you reading? Don't let us interrupt you."

"I was reading *Evangeline*," Harold answered. "You know it, of course?"

"Yes; a pretty poem: go on with it." And he read on, till he came to those lines when Evangeline addresses Gabriel in these words,—

"Gabriel! be of good cheer! for if we love one another,
Nothing in truth can harm us, whatever mischances
may happen."


He raised his head and looked at Beata. Her work was dropped, and she was looking out far beyond him, lost in thought: but her dream was broken when he ceased; and suddenly lowering her eyes, she met his earnest gaze, while he repeated slowly,—“If we love one another, nothing in truth can harm us, whatever mischances may happen.” She blushed; and began working again, while he

continued his reading. And let me tell my readers now, that Harold had not been thrown in gentle Beata's company for more than a week without finding out all her excellencies, and loving her for them. Yes, he was beginning to love her with all his great, noble heart; but he would not tell her of it, he determined, until he was able to offer her a home, which he hoped would be in two or three years' time, when he had been ordained. And Beata? that tell-tale blush revealed *her* secret that she was striving to keep, even from herself: but hour by hour it grew upon her, as she marked how noble, and manly, and yet gentle he was. And while she was sitting there, half-dreaming, listening to the sound of that dear voice, she repeated to herself,—

“The sea hath its pearls,
The heaven hath its stars,
But my heart, my heart,
My heart, hath its love.”

The last line of the poem was read, and Harold laid down the book.

“Isn't it pretty?” said Fanny, looking up with tears in her eyes. “How good she was! I wish I were like her! Beata puts me in mind of her—so gentle and good.”



"Hush, dearest!" said Beata, blushing; "it's rather uncomfortable to be praised before one's face."

"It is very pretty," said Mrs. Scott. "I like Longfellow very much, though many people cry him down; but there is a good moral tone through all his poems that I like."

"Mamma!" exclaimed Lottie, "let us go to Holmewood Dell to-morrow; it is the last day Beata and Fanny will be with us, and we all want to spend it there: so, couldn't we have one of our little pic-nics there, and you and papa come too? And it will be delightful! Do say yes."

"Certainly, dear!" her mother answered; "if it is a fine day, it will be very pleasant."

"Do you remember when we went sand-eeling?" asked Lottie.

"Yes! wasn't it jolly fun?" answered Fanny. "Harold, listen, because I am going to tell you something, and not sit there staring into vacancy."

"What does your ladyship desire me to do?" he replied.

"To listen to me, if you please. I want to instruct your mind. You don't know what sand-eeling is, and I will tell you; for we never have it in Wales. Mr. Scott, and all


of us, went one day such a long walk along the sand, and then he had a large-pronged fork, with which he digs in the sand; and by and by little silvery things would wriggle, wriggle; and then they were gone—and they are so quick—and we had to catch them: but, of course, we did not, for we were slow; and we arrived at home with three sand-eels in a very large basket, which we had foolishly thought we could fill before we started.”

“I see,” he said, laughingly, “that you have not forgotten your old habit of spinning long yarns—a very bad habit, Miss Fanny Powell, and one that I shall endeavour, as is my duty, to break you of. I shall turn school-master, and keep a rod, and try to keep you in order, when you go home.”

“I don’t think you will succeed,” said Lottie; “no one can keep her in order here, except Beata.”

“People that live in glass-houses should not throw stones, Miss Charlotte Scott,” said Fanny.

The morning was bright and pleasant for their intended excursion, and very much they enjoyed their ramble through Holmewood Dell. It was a lovely spot, away from the bustle and noise of the world; so quiet and lonely. On



one side it sloped down to the sea, and was bounded on the other by rocks, from which, in days gone by, the land, which now formed the dell, had slipped: huge moss-covered stones were scattered in all directions; the ground was carpeted with wild flowers, and trees and shrubs formed a pleasant shade to the wanderers. The three girls stole away to have their last talk together, leaving Harold and Mr. Scott under the tree where they had dined. The spot the girls chose for their resting-place was at the foot of a large rock, sheltered by trees; a tiny brook gurgled on its way to the sea, which stretched blue and wide before them, till it seemed lost in the sky. The bright sun shone down on it, and "the white-sailed ships tossed merrily" on its bosom.

"How very lovely it is here!" said Beata, on reaching this place, and throwing herself on the grass. "Oh, how sorry I am to leave it all! the dear old place!"

"But you will see lovelier places than this in Germany," said Lottie.

"Perhaps so; but never any I shall like so well, for none will have the associations that every place has here to me, and it is for them that I love every inch of ground in Hern-

dale. I wish those two years would come over again. I wonder if I shall ever be so happy again!"

"I wish we knew what would be our fates. I wonder what they will be!" said Lottie.

"No," replied Beata, "don't let us wish that; think how unhappy we should be if the veil of the future were lifted, and we saw what troubles and trials each of us have to go through before we reach our journey's end. Oh! it is very merciful of our Father to keep the veil drawn; from how much care does it not save us!"

"Yes, it is best to rely on Him only for the future," said Fanny, softly. "Do you remember that pretty hymn, Beata dear?—

'Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out by Thee,
And the changes that will surely come
I do not fear to see:
But I ask Thee for a present mind intent on pleasing
Thee.'

"It is in that spirit, darling," replied Beata, "that we ought to meet the future. Changes will come, but if we ask for grace to meet those changes, we shall not fear to see them."

There was a pause, which was broken by

Lottie asking her two friends to write very often to her.

“Certainly,” said Fanny; “only I don’t think I shall have much to say: in our hum-drum village life there are no incidents worth relating. What will it matter to you, whether Betty Jones’s son has run away to the works, or Jim Griffiths going to marry Nancy Morgan, and so on? It interests us in the village, for we know all the people, but I don’t think it is particularly edifying to anybody else: so look out for very dull letters from me. But Beata’s letters will be really worth having, for she describes so well, and she will be passing through so many countries that she will have plenty to tell us. Mind, dear, you write often, and don’t forget little Fanny;” and the girl threw her arms affectionately round her friend.

“As though I should, darling! You and Lottie will ever be my dearest friends, I hope, whatever happens; and when I return you must both come and stay with me.”

“Won’t that be delightful! And you must come and stay with me, too, up among our dear old Black Mountains; and we’ll have such stunning rides and walks! Oh! I wish it were this time next year, for you must come in the summer: then, perhaps, we can have a pic-

nic or two. But how dull I shall be till then, for there is nobody living near Penland that I care a pin about."

"And I shall be dull, too," said Lottie, sadly: "but I certainly have Ida, and she's a host in herself, for she is so merry." And thus they chattered on, till they heard Mr. Scott calling them to return.

They walked home for the most part in silence, for, now that the separation was so near, they felt very sad, and disinclined to talk. On their arrival they found Ida Herbert waiting to bid her friends good-bye, and after tea they all went out on the shore, and walked by the light of the bright August moon till ten o'clock, when they separated.

The next morning Beata, Harold, and Fanny, left by the early coach, which took them to the large town of Ampton, at which place they parted,—Beata to go to her home in Dorsetshire, Fanny and Harold to continue their long journey to Breconshire. And thus parted those three young girls, with sorrowful hearts and tearful eyes: life and all its pleasures and pains lay before them, but keenly did they feel the separation, for it seemed as though the first link in the chain of life was

snapped: but there is One above to whom we may consign them.

“Be with them, Lord, where’er they go ;
O teach them what they ought to do,
Suggest whate’er they think or say,
And keep them in the perfect way.”

CHAPTER IV.

A LARGE, comfortable, old-fashioned house, standing on a hill backed by a grove of pine-trees; in front a pretty lawn and garden, bright with flowers; to the right and left fine elms, in which the rooks cawed and chattered and built their nests; and around, on all sides, meadow land;—this was Fanny's home. The sun was fast sinking behind the mountains when the travellers arrived. In the porch three persons were standing—a tall grey-haired old man, a fine handsome-looking woman, and a servant: they were Mr. and Mrs. Powell, and Fanny's faithful nurse, Gwenny.

"Here they are at last!" was Mr. Powell's exclamation, as he saw the carriage slowly wending its way up the hill. Gwenny ran to the gate and opened it, to let it pass through, and hurried back to see her "dear child."

"Lor! how you be growed! I shouldn't a-

knowned you, Miss Fannybach, if I'd met you: no, I shouldn't!" was her exclamation.

"Dear papa and mamma, I am so glad to see you; and you too, dear Gwenny:" and she kissed them all affectionately.

"My dear child, we are all glad to have you back again: but come in, for I am sure you must both be tired after your long journey;" and Mrs. Powell led the way into the dining-room, in which a tea-dinner was laid. What a happy meal that was! and how many questions were asked about the villagers, and all that concerned that pleasant home.

"And how do you like Mr. and Mrs. Clapcott?" inquired Harold, as, tea over, they seated themselves by the open window.

"We like them exceedingly. Mrs. Clapcott is such a lady-like woman, and will, I hope, be a nice companion for Fanny," was Mrs. Powell's answer.

"Are they the new people at Glenkelly?" asked Fanny.

"Yes, they came here about six weeks ago: but when I called they were from home, so that I did not see them until the other day, when they returned our visit. We were very much pleased with them."

"Is she young?"

“Yes: about thirty, I should think; and he is forty—or less, perhaps. She is very fond of riding, and hoped that you would join them in their rides.”

“That will be lovely! I am sure I shall like them,” was Fanny’s joyful exclamation.

“Little enthusiast!” said her father, kissing her; “you have not forgotten your old habit of going into ecstasies about everything?”

“No, papa dear, I don’t think I ever shall. But don’t you think it’s best to make a great deal of a small thing? Great pleasures so seldom come, so why not be as happy and pleased as possible over the little ones that come so often?”

“Bravo! I see you have been studying logic lately. I didn’t know my sister was a philosopher before.”

“Don’t be so provoking, Harold. If ever I say anything wiser than usual, you always laugh at me, you naughty boy! instead of helping me to be cleverer.”

“I stand corrected,” said Harold, with a mock bow, “and promise to do it no more.”

“Not till next time,” said Fanny, with a merry laugh. “But what am I thinking of? I have never been in the kitchen, or the garden, or to see Nero, or —— I must go;” and away she ran, and was busy till bed-time

making friends with her numerous pets, talking to the servants, unpacking her boxes, and distributing the presents she had brought for each of the household.

Thoroughly tired, she at length lay down in her little white-curtained bed, and was soon fast asleep. The sun came peeping through the lattice-window and found her still asleep, with her hair scattered on her pillow and round her fair young face, flushed by her deep sleep, and dreaming happily, as the smile on her lip indicated.

"Get up, Miss Fanny—do; you'll be too late; missis is dressed already:" and Gwenny walked to the window, and drew aside the curtain. "It is nearly nine o'clock; you have been about twelve hours in bed! But you always was a sluggard in the morning," she continued, as she bustled about the room.

"And a little snail at night, glad enough to creep into my shell," said a little sleepy voice. "But do not, Gwenny, begin to scold the first morning. I know I am very lazy; but I had such a long journey yesterday, that I have a good excuse. So, help me dress, like a dear old Gwennycums, and 'I'll be down in a jiffy,' as you always say."

Gwenny had lived with the Powells since

Fanny was a few weeks old. She had nursed her and taken care of her from that time; so that it was no wonder that Fanny loved her, next to her parents and brother: in fact she often said, "Home would not be half home without Gwenny." In these days old servants are a rarity. I wonder why: is it the fault of the servants, or of the mistresses? I am inclined to think, the latter.

Breakfast was waiting when Fanny appeared.

"I beg pardon for being so late," she said; "but don't pitch into me for it, for Gwenny has been doing that with a vengeance. I was so tired."

"I dare say you were, dear!" replied her mother. "Gwenny should have let you had your sleep out."

"What a lovely morning it is!" said Mr. Powell, coming in. "Are you up for a ride after breakfast to Llanfychangel, Fanny?"

"Oh, yes, dear papa! It will be glorious! That's one of my favourite rides! How lovely it is!" she continued, going to the window and looking out. "There's no place half so beautiful as Wales."

The view was very beautiful. At the foot of the hill lay the village, with the spire of its little church rising in the midst: beyond that

the green fields stretched to the banks of the river, which wound like a silver thread through the quiet, lovely valley. Other villages were scattered on its banks, or nestled mid the trees, or on the side of some common, while the whole valley was shut in by the Black Mountains, whose noble outlines were clearly defined against the blue morning sky.

“Who is this coming here?” asked Fanny, as she perceived the figure of a man approaching the house.

“Oh, it is Edward Ledfir. I wonder what he is coming so early for!” said Harold, going to the window.

“And who in the world is Edward Ledfir?”

“He is the gentleman who has taken Littlewood Farm, dear,” said her mother. “He and Harold go out fishing and shooting together a good deal when Harold is at home. Ask him to come in, Harold, and have some breakfast.”

“All right, mother!” and Harold went to the door to greet his friend. He soon returned, followed by a young man of middle height, fair complexion, and a good figure. He was very handsome; and was, moreover, clever and witty. After the usual greetings they all sat down to breakfast.

"I came to ask you, Powell, if you would join me in a fishing excursion to-day," said Mr. Ledfir. "I am obliged to go to the higher part of the farm, and I thought we could ride there, and take our fishing-rods with us and fish down that little trout-stream."

"I shall be very happy to join you," was Harold's reply. "When do we start?"

"About ten o'clock, I thought; if that will suit you. Well, how did you enjoy your visit to Herndale?"

"Very much, indeed! It is such a lovely country! But how did you know I had returned?"

"I met him yesterday, and told him we expected you," answered Mr. Powell. "You have never seen my little girl before, have you, Ledfir?"

"No, I have not. But I have heard a great deal of you, Miss Powell, and I am delighted to make your acquaintance."

"We are going to ride to Llanfychangel, so we can accompany you part of the way," said Mr. Powell; "and couldn't you come back and join our family dinner?"

"I shall be very happy: but, with your leave, I think I must go and prepare for the ride;" and he left the breakfast table, and was


soon on his way to the farm, which was about a mile from the Parsonage.

“What a handsome man he is!” said Fanny. “I had no idea Breconshire could boast of such an one! Is he Welsh?”

“No, he comes from Gloucestershire,” said Harold. “He is a very good sort of a fellow, though I never can make him out. But I think, missy, you had better go and prepare for your ride; for I know of old ‘you are always John behind Davy,’ as Gwenny says.”


CHAPTER V.

FANNY POWELL was not at all pretty, but, like most women, looked well on horseback : for her figure was graceful, and she managed her pony skilfully. Her hair, which was brown and rippling, was turned up carelessly beneath her hat ; her complexion was pretty, red and white ; and she possessed the charm of a beautiful smile, and pleasant, easy, winning manners. Joyous her life had been heretofore, and thinking little of the future, she lived in the present ; which was only too happy. And thus she rode on that bright morning, without a thought of care or sorrow ; for neither had ever visited that youthful brow. Be happy while you may, dear Fanny ; for the clouds are gathering, and the storm will soon burst with fury over your devoted head. A merry party they were, as they rode through the little pass, the brook gurgling and singing over its stony bed, and



kissing the flowers which grew at the brink; and here and there a tiny waterfall, scattering the spray like diamonds on the grass: the rocks and banks on each side were covered with ferns and flowers; while the graceful rowan-tree reared its head on every side, and the weeping willow bent low to greet the stream as it hurried along. At Llanfychangel they parted, and after Mr. Powell had completed his business he and Fanny rode back, returning by Glenkelly; at which place they stopped, as Mr. Powell wished to speak to Mr. Clapcott about a meeting that was to take place the next day. A ladylike-looking woman was in the garden, who came forward to meet her visitors.

“A lovely morning, Mr. Powell, is it not? I am so glad to see you. And you have brought your daughter with you! How do you do, dear?” she said, turning to Fanny. “You must come in and rest. Mr. Clapcott is in the garden; if you will walk in, I will send the servant for him.” And so saying, she led the way into the house. Mr. Clapcott soon came in, and greeted them as kindly and warmly as his wife had done. While the two gentlemen were talking, Fanny and Mrs. Clapcott became great friends. Kind, gentle Mrs. Clapcott, was universally beloved; and no one ever knew her without de-



giving some benefit from the acquaintance. So intelligent and refined, above all, a Christian, she exercised an influence for good over every one who approached her.

"You will come often and see me, dear; will you not?" she said, as Fanny and her father were mounting their horses.

"That I will," said Fanny: "I shall only be too pleased to do so." And kissing her hand to her new acquaintance she rode off, followed by Mr. Powell.

"Well, Fanny," said the latter, as they cantered on, "how do you like Mrs. Clapcott?"

"Very much, indeed: she is so kind; and then, she is fond of sketching from nature: so we are going out together some day. Won't it be delightful?"

"Yes, dear. I dare say you will enjoy it very much. I have not seen any of your drawings since last summer: you must show them to me when we get home. Do you like it as well as ever?"

"Better, I think, now that I know more about it. I have taken sketches of most of the places near Herndale. We three used to go out sketching very often; that was a happy time at dear old Herndale."

"You are not regretting that you are at home, are you?"

"No. Oh, no! I am very happy here: how could I be otherwise with you, and dear mamma, and Harold? But still, you know, I am a little sorry that that life at Herndale can never come again: it was such unalloyed happiness. But home is the best, after all; 'be it ever so humble, there's no place like home.'"

"May you ever think so, dear child. Of whatever age, or of whatever station we may be, home is the place of rest. The poor man, in all his toil, thinks with pleasure of the rest awaiting him at home in the evening, after having borne the burden and heat of the day. Even so the people of God long for their rest in heaven. It supports them in every trial; enables them to overcome every difficulty. 'Jesus is my Saviour, and heaven is my home,' is the thought of every Christian heart."

"Are you tired, dear?" said her mother, when they reached the house.

"No, *mater* deary; only a little. I shall be all right after lunch. And it seemed so nice to be on little Fairy again."

After lunch she went out to have a little chat with Gwenny, and wandered over the house and garden, and at last returned to the

drawing-room, where she was soon deep in a book. Half lying on a couch in one of the deep window-recesses, her thoughts concentrated on the pages of her book, she did not hear her brother and Edward Ledfir enter the room. Harold stole up gently behind her, and taking her face in his hands, lifted it up to kiss her.

"Oh, Harold, you horrid fellow! How you frightened me! I never heard you come in."

"What book is my little sister studying now? Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* Well, how do you like it, pussy-cat?"

"Very much. Is it not a delightful book? It's so clever, and makes one so excited. How I do like dear Amyas; don't you? I am sure, if I had been a man, I would have followed him to the end of the world; he is perfection, I think: but there is the dinner-bell, so we must go."

"What sport did you have? Did the fish rise well to-day?" asked Mr. Powell, as they arranged themselves round the dinner-table.

"We caught ten brace of fine trout; a pretty good day's work, I think. We called at Morgan's on our way home. He is in great trouble. His pretty daughter, Mary, has run off with young Lewis of Verralyde."

"Oh, dear! dear!" said Mrs. Powell, "what a pity for such a nice, pretty-looking girl, to be married to that wild young man! No doubt they *are* in trouble, poor things! I will drive over to see them to-morrow. Dear! dear! how could the girl be so silly? That's the way with girls: they only think of marrying, and love, and such-like nonsense."

"They don't think of the proverb, I suppose," remarked Edward Ledfir,—"'Marry in haste, and you'll repent at leisure.'"

"That's it, I think; if they thought more of that, there would be fewer unhappy marriages," returned Mrs. Powell.


"Now mind, Fanny," said her brother, with mock solemnity, "that you never marry in haste; always take plenty of time to consider. It's my fixed intention to take *my* time about marrying, so I hope you will follow your brother's good example."

"I couldn't follow a better; could I?" she answered.

CHAPTER VI.

THE summer and winter have passed away, and now spring has once more come to gladden the earth with her flowers and sunshine. Pleasantly and calmly the months have flown by, bringing few troubles or cares to the inhabitants of Penland. Harold has returned to Oxford after the Easter vacation, and Fanny is looking forward to the time when Beata (who has returned from abroad) will come and pay her long-promised visit to Penland.

"Fanny," said her father, one bright afternoon, "come down in the village with me. I am going to visit some poor people, and you can go on to the school." So Fanny put on her bonnet and joined her father in his walk, down the hill, past the old church, across the village green, to the school, where they parted. There was a noise in the schoolroom as Fanny



entered, and the angry voice of the mistress could be heard above all.

"You naughty, good-for-nothing little dab, I'll teach you—there, and there!" and the sound of a hard smack with the hand was distinctly audible.

"And what is the matter, Jemmy? What has he been doing, Miss Jones?"

"He has been a very naughty boy, Miss Powell," answered Miss Jones, "and he ought to be ashamed of himself."

"But what has he done?" again inquired Fanny.

"Why, miss, I told him not to scribble on his slate, and he would do it; and when I scolded him, he said it didn't matter, and he didn't care a pin for me or my scolding."

"No more I does," said Jemmy, too angry to care for any one, or to think of the consequences of his temerity.

"Hush! dear," and a kind hand was laid on his shoulder,— "hush! You must not be so naughty;" and she sat down, and passed her arm round the boy. Those few words disarmed Jemmy's wrath, and he burst into tears.

"Listen," said Fanny, when the boy's sobs had ceased; "listen, and I will tell you a story."

And the children gathered round her, while she told them of the little pig who would do what his mother told him not,—

“Who thought he was wiser, poor thing, than his mother,
And was always contriving some nonsense to chatter,
And when she reproved him said, ‘What does it matter?’”

“But you see it did matter; his mother knew better than the conceited little pig: for from disobeying her he was drowned. So, never think you know better than any one else, for, sooner or later, you’ll repent it. Now, Jemmy dear, are you sorry for your rudeness to Miss Jones?”

“Yes, ma’am,” gasped Jemmy.

“Then go and beg her pardon. Say you are very sorry, and will try and not be so rude again.”

Jemmy went, and promised “not to do it never again,” and Miss Jones granted her pardon in an exceedingly stiff, cold manner, for she was not best pleased at Miss Powell’s “interference.”

“Are the other children getting on well?” inquired Fanny.

“Yes, miss, pretty well; but they give me a great deal of trouble; they are the naughtiest

children I ever did see : sometimes I do think I never can stand it," grumbled Miss Jones.

"Poor little children!" thought Fanny; "I am glad I am not you, with that cross old thing to teach me."

"You must try and be better children," she said aloud, "and not give Miss Jones so much trouble."

And after looking over the copy-books, and going into various little details concerning the school, she turned to go; but first she went up to Jemmy, and stroking his curly hair told him to try and be a good boy, so that she might hear a better account when she came next time, and kissing his rosy cheek she left the school. Passing across the Green, she saw a woman standing at the door of her cottage.

"Do ye walk in Miss Powell, now," she said. "I haven't a-seen you I don't know the day when; not since you was so kind to make that little frock for our Emma. Poor little thing! she's uncommon bad now with the hooping-cough. There she is, poor little maid: she do bide like that all the day long, and she 'on't speak, or nothing."

"Poor child!" said Fanny, going up to her, "she does look very ill: have you seen the doctor?"

"No, miss, I haven't: I can't get out and I've nobody to send."

"Well, I will ask him to call. I shall most likely see him to-morrow."

"Thank you, miss. I do allus say you be the kindest young lady in these parts."

"I am glad to be of service to any one if I can," answered Fanny. "How is your husband?"

"Oh! he be pretty well, thank you: he has reg'lar work now, and that makes him better tempered; not that I have anything to complain of, for he is a pretty goodish husband to me—better than many on 'em. Lor! I remember," she went on, "when first I see'd him. It was at meeting, I remember, a pretty many years ago. I didn't think then that he was to be my husband; and then, soon after, he sent a letter to my brother, asking if I would keep company with him; and so I'd no objection; and then, after that, about a year, we was married. Lor! how funny those things do come about, don't they?"

"Yes, indeed," said Fanny, thinking meanwhile that it must have been a strange courtship.

"And your turn 'll come some day, miss; but don't ye be in a hurry now, for after ye're married come all the troubles, as thick as bees."

Fanny, assuring her that she had no intention of marrying just yet, turned away, and hurried home. There she found a note awaiting her from Mrs. Clapcott, asking her to come to a large party at their house on the following Thursday. She wrote to accept it, after consulting her mother, and then taking a book sauntered down to a little dell, about half a mile from the house. But while she is dreaming away the afternoon, let us glance at the change that has taken place in two of our friends during the past six months. In two persons, did I say? Nay, I mistake: in one only have new ideas been engendered; the other is cold, calculating, worldly as ever. The persons I speak of are Fanny Powell and Edward Ledfir. Strange that the names of two beings so opposite in character should be coupled together! And yet it was so. Fanny had never thought of love until she saw Edward Ledfir, one who in every thought, in every feeling, was so different from the high-spirited and high-minded girl. I don't want you to like him, and I don't think you will, when you know more of him. Some such thoughts as these were passing through his mind that bright May day,—

“I do not see that I can do better; she has, they say, ten thousand pounds clear from her

mother's settlement; and the girl likes me—I am sure she does. Ah! people call me a lady-killer; ha! ha! But none can kill me, I like all alike; though, perhaps, I may have the preference to Miss Fanny, for she has plenty of that useful article, money: so I think I will propose to her. Yes! I can't do better."

While simple Fanny was dreaming beside the trickling rill, dreaming of the false words he had spoken when last they met, wondering if such great happiness was really in store for her as to be Edward Ledfir's wife,—thinking of a hundred and one things, all quite as vain and foolish, but which you and I, dear reader, I dare say, have often thought of, and have not found ourselves so foolish; so do not let us blame her: it was her first love, and, they say, first loves are always loved more passionately than after ones. So let her dream on, thinking, in the innocency of her heart, that every one is as true as herself; her eyes will be opened some day, but, in the meantime, ignorance to her is bliss: so I say again, let her dream on.

CHAPTER VII.

THURSDAY morning came, and brought with it a letter for Fanny, from Beatrice Lennox. It was as follows:—

“ *Monckton, May 20th, 18—.*

“ MY DEAREST FANNY,—Many thanks for your letter, and the kind invitation contained therein. You know, dear, that nothing will give me greater pleasure than to spend a little time with you in Wales. But first I want you to come and see me. I will really have no denial. You must come. On the 4th of June there is to be a grand choral meeting in our old church; and as I am sure you will enjoy it, I want you to come before that time. Write and fix a day, and we will meet you at the station. Mamma and the boys are exceedingly anxious to make your acquaintance. Hoping

to have a speedy and acquiescing answer, and with much love,

“ I remain,

“ Your loving friend,

“ BEATA.”


“ What shall I do ? ” asked Fanny, handing the letter to her mother.

“ Go, of course ! ” answered Mrs. Powell, after perusing it. “ You want a little change, dear ! Your papa and I were talking only this morning about sending you for change of air to Tenby, to your aunt ; so this will do instead, and then you can bring Beata back with you.”

And so it was arranged that Fanny should leave home on the 28th ; and a letter to that effect was despatched to Beata. Fanny was in a state of great delight.

“ I think the world is gone mad, or else I am ! ” she said to Gwenny, who was dressing her for the evening : “ two grand things happening on the same day—a large party, and an invitation.”

“ Now do ye, Miss Fanny, stay still, and not jump about so ! How am I to do your hair, if you fidget all the time like this ? ” exclaimed Gwenny, complainingly.



"You said last night, when you told my fortune on the cards, that I was to have a great surprise; and it has come true, you see, you nice old gipsy!" And thus she chattered on while Gwenny dressed her.

"Well, Miss Fanny do look pretty, how-somedever, to-night!" said Gwenny to herself, as Fanny descended to the drawing-room.

A very pretty figure, indeed, it was that was reflected in the mirror! She was dressed in pure white, with a few white moss-rose buds placed in the rich wavy hair that lay, half-curling, on the fair young brow, and round the smooth, soft cheek, bright with the flush of pleasure and excitement.

"What a silly little animal it is," said her father, gazing at her fondly and proudly, "to get so excited! Suppose, after all, which is very likely to be the case, that you do not enjoy yourself to-night?"

She came up to him, and laying her hand on his shoulder, kissed him tenderly.

"Papa dear, I saw in some book something which I always remember, when I think I am wrong to be so excited. It is this: 'Blessed is he who expecteth everything, for he enjoys everything—*once*, at least.' Do you understand, dear papa?"

"You may be right, dear; you may be right!" he answered, as he led the way to the carriage, which was waiting for them, followed by Mrs. Powell and Fanny.

The evening passed merrily away in dancing, singing, and playing. One heart, at least, was made supremely happy; for, before they separated, Edward Ledfir had proposed to Fanny. It was agreed that he should call next morning at Penland, and formally ask her hand from her father.

"Are you tired, my dear?" asked her mother. "Why are you so quiet?"


Fanny nestled close up to her, and whispered,—“No, not tired, but too happy in my thoughts to speak much.”

The next day Edward Ledfir came; and, after a little consultation, it was settled, and Fanny and he were engaged.

"A very good match for her," said Mrs. Powell: "a nice young man with a good fortune, and a pretty house. I am glad she is provided for so comfortably."

For the next few days Fanny was radiant with happiness, and yet, in the midst of it all, she would question herself whether she really loved him well enough.

"He is so fond of me," she would say to



herself, "and I don't half enough return his love; I wish I were more worthy of him." But still, deep and true as her love was, she sometimes also thought that he was not quite what she used in old days to picture to herself as her idea of a man she would marry: there was not an answer, as it were, to her ideas; she felt a little kind of restraint when with him, but when she was away from him she thought of him only as the piece of perfection she wished him to be. "After all," she would say, "I cannot expect a man to think the same as a silly little girl like me, and I dare say the fault is in myself." Was he deserving of such love?

"I have to congratulate you, have I not?" said Mrs. Clapcott, one day when Fanny called on her. "I hope you will be happy, dearest. And when are you to be married?"

"Not until next year: you see, I am so young—too young to be at the head of an establishment; I should never get the servants to obey me. Fancy," she went on, laughingly, "fancy me a farmer's wife, with my dress pinned up, and walking about in the dairy in pattens, and making the butter and cheese,—what fun it will be!"

"How fond you are of building castles in the

air! Take care that, like the girl in the fable, your pail of milk does not come to the ground."

She laughed, and said, "They are very small castles, at any rate; so the crash will not be very great if they fall: but come out for a walk, it is such a lovely day."

"Do you know what this reminds me of to-day?" said Mrs. Clapcott, as they wandered up to the common at the back of Glenkelly: "of some lines I saw the other day in a book I was reading,—

‘While all the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal blowing wind,
Smells of the coming summer.’ ”

"How pretty!" exclaimed Fanny: "and just suited for to-day, for it does smell of the coming summer. Look down there, in that hollow,—there is Littlewood: doesn't it look picturesque, with its gable-ends and the smoke gently curling? I am sure I ought to be very thankful that I have such a future in store for me. But I want to ask you something, Mrs. Clapcott. I want to know —— how shall I explain what I mean? When you were engaged to Mr. Clapcott did you ever feel that—that—that—he wasn't just what you expected?"

Mrs. Clapcott looked down sadly on her young

companion. "Poor child!" she thought, "has it come to that already? I never liked that young Ledfir. I wish she had chosen any one but him, for he is not suited to her. My dear," she said aloud, "I don't remember ever having that feeling; but doesn't Mr. Ledfir quite come up to your idea of perfection?"

"Oh!" said Fanny, eagerly, "I love him very dearly, and he is very good; too good for me: yet when I am with him I—— I—— can see his faults. Not exactly his faults; for he has none that I know of: but —— you know what I mean; and then, when I am away from him, I think that I exaggerate what I did not like in him; and that it is my fault. And I thought I would ask you, for I did not think it was right."

"I quite understand what you mean, dear one," Mrs. Clapcott replied; "for I have often felt it myself with some of my friends: but I read a very pretty little bit about it the other day, 'that when we are with friends we see their imperfections; like when we are near mountains we see all their ruggedness and unevenness: but when we are away from them we remember only their virtues, as we only see all the beauty of the hills when at a distance.' Is not that a beautiful simile?"

“Very! Then you think it quite natural that I feel as I do? Well, I am very glad, for I thought I was wrong.”

“My dear,” said Mrs. Clapcott to her husband, on her return home, “my dear, I sincerely hope that Fanny will not marry that Edward Ledfir; for he is not worthy of her: and, poor little thing, she is so fond of him, and tries so hard to think that everything he does is right.”

CHAPTER VIII.

ELDON LODGE, where Beata Lennox lived, was a pretty place. The house was built by the river-side, and from the drawing-room window you looked up the stream, bowered by trees, and across which a rustic bridge was thrown; and beyond, to the railroad and the downs. By the river-side, and seated on a rustic bench, was Beata's own dear self; and at her feet, with her hands supporting her earnest face, gazing at her friend, was Fanny: for the few days have passed, and she is now in Dorsetshire. They are talking earnestly; let us draw near and listen to them, as they sit there, in the quiet twilight of the May night.

“But, Beata dearest, I do love him with all my heart and soul: when you know him, then you will find out how kind and good he is. He wrote me such a dear letter to-day—don't you think so? Dear, dear Edward!”

"I hope you don't love him too much," said Beata. "You will let me have at least a little of your affection?"

"Now, you dear old darling, do you think that anything would make me love you less? Edward knows all about you, and how kind you are to his 'little betrothed,' as he calls me. There is no one in the world that I can talk to as I can to you, Beata," she added, after a pause. "I can talk everything to you, from the sublime to the ridiculous, my dear, dear Beata!" Then, pausing an instant, she went on—"Do you remember the little German song which says, 'thy God *alone* can give to thee the true and quiet evening's rest?' It is that I want; that true rest. Oh, God! give it to me, I pray. Though I am possessed of such great happiness, do you know, Beata, I feel sometimes as it if were not lasting; as if a touch would break the little bubble of my joy: it seems too great to last long. And, worse than all, I am afraid prosperity is taking my heart away from God. I don't feel nearly so much about those things as I used; and I feel as if something must and would come to lead me back to Him."

"My darling," said Beata, gently, "remember He has said, 'I will heal their backslidings;' so turn to Him again, and pray

without fear: for He will keep His word, and will heal you."

"Oh, Beata! how good you are! I wish I were like you; you always seem to say and do the right thing," said Fanny.

"No, no: on the contrary, I am always doing something wrong; something I wish I had left undone."

"That is just like me, then. I often wish my tongue were cut shorter; for I have such a habit of saying just what comes uppermost. If it is a nice, agreeable thing, it is all right; but if it is not, it's all wrong; and I have only to tear my hair, and wring my hands in anguish, at my heedlessness. Ah! Beata, dearie! I am not a bit altered; I am still the same: 'little madcap,' Mr. Scott used to call me."

"Talking of Mr. Scott, do you know I had a letter a few days ago from Lottie?" interrupted Beatrice; "and she tells me that she is engaged; and to whom do you think? Guess."

"I suppose to that Mr. Stone, who was so smitten with her at the pic-nic at Carlingsford. Am I right?"

"Yes. I believe they are to be married soon."

"Then I hope they'll ask me to the wedding, like good, kind creatures. I should like to be

bridesmaid. Poor little Lottiecums ! I wonder if she 's as happy as I ?”

Before Beata could reply, two tall boys had approached the place where the girls were seated. It is just light enough to distinguish the new arrivals ; let us glance at them as they saunter up. The eldest is a tall, finely-formed lad of seventeen, with intelligent grey eyes and a happy, cheerful look, on his handsome face ; the younger is dark, with beautiful deep blue eyes, fringed by long dark lashes, and a dreamy look in them when he was silent, but when he spoke they sparkled like diamonds.

“What are you two mooning away your time out here for, like a couple of lovers ?” he asked. “Are we permitted to join you, or are you talking of things not meant for the ears of the world in general ?”

“We are not talking secrets now, Harry,” said his sister, “so you may be allowed to join us.”

“By that *now*, I suppose you mean to insinuate that you have been talking secrets,” said Willie, the eldest. “I wonder what they were ?”

“Willie ! Willie !” exclaimed Fanny, “the organ of inquisitiveness is decidedly largely developed on your head, for you are one of the

most inquisitive boys I ever had the pleasure of knowing."

"Je suis un . . . what is 'inquisitive' in French?" said Willie, who was very fond of carrying on conversations in that language, but which he was generally obliged to translate for the edification of others,—“ Oh, I know! 'curieux:' je suis un curieux garçon,—n'est-ce pas raison?"

"I think you are a 'curieux garçon,'" answered Fanny. "But have you no news to tell us? what have you been doing with yourselves this evening?"

"We played cricket, and I got twenty-six runs in two innings. Very good, wasn't it?"

"I should think so, but I do not know much about cricket: you boys must teach me, if you please."

"All right," replied Harry; "if you will get up early I will teach you: there is nothing like cricket," and he made a hit with an imaginary bat at an imaginary ball. "I forgot, I was to tell you young ladies to c, t, s—come to supper." And they went into the cheerfully lighted room, where the whole family were assembled. Mr. and Mrs. Lennox, nice, hearty, hospitable people—the former sunburned with his many travels, the latter a handsome dark woman;

Jenny, the eldest daughter, who was very much like our old friend Beata; and the youngest boy, Alfred, were the occupants of the room.

Fanny, who always made herself at home everywhere, was of course so here, in this amiable family. They were all so very fond of her, and the time spent at Monckton was the happiest she passed for many a long day.

"Where have you been, Alfred?" asked Harry on entering: "we have been looking for you, but could not find you."

"I have been here and there and everywhere, like a dog in a fair," said Alfred, looking up from the book he was reading: "but you could not have looked much, or you would have found me. I have been in the cricket-field nearly all the afternoon; and whom do you think I saw? Mr. Smart, fresh and blooming as ever! He has a new pair of gig-lamps, and smiled most benignantly through them."

"He is a comical old chap," said Harry. "I hope he will come here, for I want Fanny to see him. He will be sure to fall in love with you—he always does with every young lady he meets: so beware, for perhaps it will be mutual; and then, what will Mr. What's-his-name say?"

"Come to supper, children," said their mother, "and do not tease Fanny. My dear, you

shouldn't let them tease you so," she added, turning to Fanny.

"Oh, I like it! I am always teased wherever I go; and it is but fair, if I tease them, that they should do the same to me."

"Mind, you promised to play a game of chess with me this evening, madam," said Willie.


"All right," was the answer: "place the men, and I will play with you as soon as I have finished my supper."

The game was played and then they all retired for the night, after receiving each a kiss and a "God bless you," from the kind, good mother.

CHAPTER IX.

THE 4th of June dawned a bright sunny day. The town was filled with people in their holiday attire, all wending their way to the great grey Abbey, standing grandly and solemnly in the large Close, and from whose old tower the bells rang out their sweet peal. And now, up the broad aisle, the clergyman and choristers from the neighbouring villages come two and two, in their white surplices, and singing an anthem as they walk ; and as their voices rise and fall, and die away in the long aisles of the beautiful building, more than one eye is wet with those sweet tears that music or glorious views call forth so often.

“How did you like it, Fanny ?” asked Harry, when they returned home.



She stood looking dreamily into the water, without answering him for a few minutes.

"I enjoyed it too much to talk of it, Harry; I never can speak of anything that I like as I did that. Oh, Beata! what beautiful music it was! Doesn't it make one think?"

"Mr. Smart est arrivé," said Willie, coming up; "he has come to lunch with us."

"Now mind, and behave pretty," said Harry; "and, who knows? you may become Mrs. Smart some day."

"I want to see him very much: you boys are always talking of him, so I suppose he is a character."

"I should think so, 'rather,'" he answered.

A young man of middle height, fair hair, and with a long nose, on which rested a pair of spectacles, was introduced to Fanny as the redoubtable Mr. Smart.

Most peculiar was he in speech, manner, and appearance—but although very amusing (for you were obliged to laugh at his little oddities), he was very good-hearted and kind. There is good in every one, if we will, like the bee, extract the honey from the poison. Some people there are whose sole business seems to be to find out everything bad of their neigh-

bours, and turn every little thing to their disadvantage: how do they not know but what they would have acted in precisely the same manner if they had been the people they condemn? And is it not much pleasanter to take the good that is sure to be in every one, and leave their faults to themselves and their Maker? "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Our little Fanny was not one of this class; she belonged to the bee genus, and she soon discovered that Mr. Smart was both very good-natured and clever: "though certainly, poor man, he does not seem like the latter, when you speak to him at first," she remarked.

His visit was certainly an ordeal for her, she could hardly repress her mirth while those naughty boys stood by, and she felt she dare not turn her head lest they would make her laugh aloud. But he left at last, and then, in the boys' parlance, Fanny "pitched into them right and left" for making her laugh. "You naughty, wicked boys! how could you behave so badly?" she said.

"Je demande pardon," pleaded Willie, not fearing Fanny's wrath very much, and then they all gathered round her, begging her and Beata to come for a walk with them; and they

went, and a merry walk they had, as you can imagine. The next day they went for a long ride—Fanny, Beata, Harry, and Alfred. Away they scampered, up hill and down dale, their merry voices floating like “music on the wind,” through many a village and hamlet, past many a storied oak and haunted wood. A cry—a suppressed scream—and they had gathered round Alfred, who had been thrown from his pony, and whose fair young head was lying in the dust, bleeding terribly. They lifted him tenderly, and carried him to a cottage near the spot, and despatched the manservant for a doctor, while Harry rode off to Monckton to fetch a carriage to take the poor boy home, if he could be moved; and also to inform their mother. The doctor shook his head ominously on seeing him still insensible.

“A bad accident, young ladies,” he said. “I am afraid he must not be moved to-day. Do you live far from here?”

“At Monckton,” Beata replied. “Our name is Lennox.”

“What! John Lennox’s children? He was one of the best friends I ever had; he gave me a start when I began life as a poor doctor, and now—ha! ha!—I can jingle my sovereigns in

my pocket. I'm a queer old fellow, you see," he continued, smiling kindly at them; "but tell your father, that though I have had many ups and downs in my lifetime, and although the world has tried to make me hard-hearted, yet Thomas White has some gratitude left, and remembers him still with love and esteem."

Poor little Alfred could not be moved that day, and Mrs. Lennox, when she arrived, resolved to stay with him, and sent off for many little things to make the invalid comfortable. Neither Fanny nor Beata would leave the cottage, but helped to nurse him through that night of suspense; for as yet they could not tell how much he was injured, as he was still insensible. Morning dawned at last, and Alfred opened his blue eyes and asked where he was. With what thankfulness they heard him speak! and when Mr. White announced to them that the wound was not at all dangerous, but that he might be moved to his home, with what heartfelt, though silent, thanks did they not acknowledge the goodness of their Heavenly Father, who had thus spared to them this much-loved child! It was, however, many days before Alfred's fair head and

bright young face appeared in the family circle. Beata, Jenny, and Fanny, sat with him by turns during the day, reading to him, when he could bear it, or talking to him, and trying to amuse him. Fanny was very happy, for she heard very often from her betrothed, and wrote lengthy epistles in return, which I am afraid were not appreciated as they deserved to be. And so the happy time passed on. One morning, a few days before that fixed for her departure, Fanny was sitting by the river-side, reading.

"What book have you there?" asked Beata, coming up to her; "you seem very much interested in it."

"It is Kingsley's *Miscellanies*," returned Fanny. "I am reading about that dear Walter Raleigh. I wish," she said, looking into the water, and watching the fish basking in the sunshine, and the flies floating hither and thither on the face of the river, as if asking the fish to catch them; "I wish Edward were like him!—he is so *very* noble, so grand, so great a sort of man, that if one met in real life, one must do involuntary homage to. I had no idea, before I read this, what a great man he was. I thought of him only as a man, who,

going over to America, brought back with him potatoes and tobacco; but now I seem to *know* him, and he has ceased to be associated in my mind with a jumble of vegetables, spreading his cloak for Elizabeth, and writing, 'Fain would I climb, but fear to fall,' on the palace window: but he has become instead my hero, — a great honour to him, isn't it?"

"His is certainly a very beautiful character," Beata answered; "but I never get so enthusiastic over persons or things as you do. But who is this coming here?"

"Why, it's Harold! In the name of all that's wonderful, what does he want here?" exclaimed Fanny. "Harold, is it you or your ghost that I perceive?" she asked, going to meet him.

"My own real self, I believe, Fanny," he said, laughingly. "I dare say you *are* surprised at my appearance; but I took it into my head to pass through Dorsetshire on my way home; and so I thought I would call here and take you back with me."

"On your way home! My dear Harold, what a round-about-way!" Fanny observed.

Before the evening was over she was nodding her wise little head, and inwardly con-

gratulating herself on her cleverness in discovering (what was very easy to be seen) the reason of Harold's extraordinary journey to Dorsetshire. Poor Harold had been longing to see Beata's sweet face for many a long day; and he could no longer restrain the desire to look on his beloved once more. And Beata? her sparkling eyes and bright smile testified her happiness.

Mr. and Mrs. Lennox were glad to welcome Fanny's brother to their home, and insisted on his staying with them for a few days.

Oh, how happy those days were! How the hours seemed to fly! Dream on! dream on! young hearts: there is stillness and quiet, ever before a storm. And look! in the horizon there is a cloud just rising, which is coming slowly and surely towards you, and will crush you under its weight: so lay hold on those golden hours as they fly, for they may never return again: dream on! and enjoy the sunshine while it lasts.

"You will come and see us soon — won't you, Beata?" said Fanny, a day or two before she left. "I am so disappointed that you cannot return with us, as was at first arranged; that tiresome Mrs. Nicholls, and her equally

tiresome daughter, why need they come just now, and oblige you to stay at home?—Stupid people!”

“Poor things! how I pity them to have incurred your displeasure! But if all is well, I will come next month, when the boys’ holidays begin.”

“And bring them with you! That will be glorious! What lovely rides and pic-nics we shall have! Those dear boys! how sorry I am to leave them! But I am comforted in the thought of seeing them again soon.”

“You are getting to love them better than me,” said Beata; “and I shall get jealous, you know.”

“You need not fear that, you dear old darling!”

How little did they think then, as they chatted on, what was before them! How little did Harold think, when he wished Beata “good-bye!” that “it may be for years, and it may be for ever!” Such is life! Who can tell what a day may bring forth? And once more, when they shook hands at the station, Harold bent down over Beata, and murmured, almost prophetically,—“For if we love one another, nothing in truth can harm us, what-

ever misfortunes may happen." And in another moment the train had left the station, and was bearing its freight far away over the land. Would those two, who loved one another so tenderly, ever meet again this side eternity?

CHAPTER X.

It was a week after Fanny and Harold had returned to Penland, on a warm July morning; the sun shone so brightly through the windows, as if in mockery of the grief that reigned within the house.

Dreaming not of the trouble that was coming, blithely and merrily did Fanny rise that morning; and as she dressed, meditated how she would spend the day.

"After breakfast I will go for a long ride. I will ask Harold to come with me; and perhaps we may meet Edward as we go by Littlewood, and then come home by Glenkelly to ask Mrs. Clapcott to spend the day with us on the *mater's* birthday. And then I shall have a nice time for reading that new book." And her thoughts went wandering off to the story, wondering how it would end, and whether the

hero and heroine would "marry and be happy." And musing thus, she ran down to the breakfast-room.

She opened the door; and, instead of the happy faces that usually turned to greet her, saw her father sitting by the table, with his head buried in his hands, her mother crying, and Harold standing by the window, gazing mournfully and drearily over the land, now basking in the morning sunshine.

As she entered, her father raised his head and said,—“Don’t tell Fanny.”

“What is the matter?” she asked, anxiously. “Why won’t you tell me?” And seeing that they did not answer, she laid her hand on her father’s shoulder, and went on passionately,—“Why will you always treat me as a child? Oh, father, tell me what grieves you! If I cannot lessen, I may, at least, share your sorrow.”

“You are right!” he said, gently; “but I did not wish to tell you, lest it should pain you.”

“But it pains me much more that you do not confide in me,” she answered.

“I will tell you, then,” he said, sadly.

“Child—little Fanny—we are beggars!”

She turned and looked at him,—“And you

feared to tell me *that*, dear, *dear* papa ! What do you think I am made of ?”

He smiled mournfully. “ You do not quite understand what poverty is, my darling ; but, alas ! I am afraid you will soon taste its bitterness. Why, oh, why did I trust him ?” And he bowed his head and wept.

“ What is the matter ? Tell me, Harold,” whispered Fanny. “ Whom did papa trust ? Tell me ; for I ought to know.”

“ I cannot tell you much, little sister, at present,” he returned. “ I only know that our father became surety for some person, who has betrayed him ; and that now, instead of being well off, we are almost beggars. I know no more at present ; but I dare say, by and by, I shall hear all particulars, and I will then tell you. Only, little sister, let us try and bear the trial as we ought ; and remember that He does not ‘ wil-lingly afflict the children of men ;’ and ‘ that our light affliction, which is only for a moment, worketh a far greater and exceeding weight of glory.’” He looked down into her face, and taking it between his hands kissed it. Only one face in the world he thought sweeter than the little, sad, earnest one he gazed at now. His thoughts flew to her, and a selfish one crossed his mind. “ Would not this prevent

their marrying?" But it was instantly stifled. Dear Harold! would there were more like you in the world. Why do men so often think it womanly, and beneath them, to be Christians? Do they not see that it ennobles and elevates them? That pearl of great price, why do merchants so seldom sell all they possess to buy it?

A sad breakfast it was that July morning; so different from the merry, happy breakfasts of bygone days. The servants came in to prayers, as usual; but poor Mr. Powell could not read them, and motioned to Harold to do so. In a deep, earnest voice, speaking from the depths of his heart, he prayed: "Deliver us from the love of this vain world, and from that multitude of cares and anxieties to which, through the selfishness and frailty of our nature, we are continually prone. Convince us of the shortness of time and the value of eternity; and of the near approach of that day when we shall give account of all things done in the body, and shall hear from Thee our eternal doom. O grant us grace to lay hold on those promises which are set before us, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure; and thus may this world, in which we dwell, become the door of entrance to a better state; the blessed means of bringing us to Thee, our

Father. Strengthen us in this our season of trial; guide us through all difficulties, and bless us in all the scenes of life through which we may pass. Affliction has come upon us; inspire us with humble resignation to Thy will. Oh! visit us not in Thine indignation, but turn the mournful events of Thy providence to our spiritual and endless good."

Very sadly did the servants leave the room. "What did Master Harold mean by saying, 'Affliction has come upon us?' What affliction? Is missis's sister dead, or what?" And thus they wondered on, till Mr. Powell himself came out into the kitchen and spoke to them. He told them that a trouble had come upon his family, and that he very much feared that he could not afford to keep so many servants any longer; but that he was now going to Brecon, to see if something could not be done: and telling the groom to harness the horse, he left the poor, faithful servants, mourning over their master's unknown misfortune.

"Fanny, we are going to Brecon, to see if there is a hope that we may yet save a part of our property."

"But, Harold, tell me the exact truth. I always like to know the bottom of everything, you know," she said, smilingly; "so tell me

what it is that makes us all so quiet and sad. We shall not mind if papa is not able to keep so many servants or horses as he used."

"Come here, child:" and he drew her to him. "Listen; a gentleman—my father did not tell me his name—asked him to sign his name to a document for twenty thousand pounds: by that act of his he became responsible for the payment of the money. Do you understand? The man—the thief (for he was no better than one), ran away; and our father is obliged to pay the money, which will ruin him. He and I, and our mother, are going now about it."

"Poor, poor papa and mamma, what will they do? They have nothing to look forward to, as you and I have, Harold dear. Poor papa! he will have to deprive himself of many luxuries, I am afraid."

They drove off, and Fanny waited patiently for her lover, to whom she had written, telling him of their misfortune. She waited long, and, like Mariana in the moated grange, "she was aweary." Poor little heart! how it beat at every footstep! How she longed to see his face, and feel his kiss on her lips, and hear his comforting words! Three—four o'clock—and still he came not. At last, the well-known knock was

heard at the door, and he entered. She started up eagerly, and went to meet him : but his cold face frightened her. " I thought you were never coming, Edward," she said, timidly. " What made you so long ? "

" I was prevented," he answered shortly. " But what is this I hear ? Is it true what you told me ? You are not ruined ? "

" Yes, quite," she answered. " I am afraid, we—I mean, papa and mamma—are poor now."

" What ! " he interrupted ; " you have property independent of your parents ? "

She smiled. " No, no ! not that : you did not let me finish my sentence, and it was going to be such a pretty one. I said, I am not poor, for have I not your —— ? " She stopped, for again the cold look came into his eyes. " What is the matter ? " she asked. " Why do you look like that ? "

" You say that you have no property independent of your parents ? "

" None that I know of," she said, wonderingly. " But why do you ask me these questions now ? "

" Mere curiosity, dear," he answered, endeavouring to throw some tenderness into his voice ; " nothing more. But where are your

parents? And tell me, what occasioned your misfortune?"

She explained to him all that she knew of the affair: he listened silently to her, but the cold look was in his eyes still, and the cool manner in which he received the news irritated her. She had expected him to take her in his arms, call her his darling, and tell her not to grieve; but there he sat, listening to her as if he had been a stranger. She turned to him half angrily,—“How cross you are! what have I done to offend you?”

He laughed satirically.

“When people are not in an amiable temper, they are apt to think that it is other people who are cross.”

“How very cruel you are, to make such unkind remarks, Edward!” said Fanny, with the tears gathering in her eyes. “You are not at all nice this afternoon: you kept me expecting you for two or three hours, and when at last you make your appearance: you taunt me in a most cruel way, and ask strange and irrelevant questions. I don’t believe you love me a bit!”

“I am sorry, Miss Powell, that I cannot please you to-day; perhaps I had better leave you till you are in a more amiable mood,” and he turned away.

"Edward, Edward, what has changed you so much?" The thought did cross her mind, "Perhaps it is because I have no money now;" but she repelled the idea, for her faith in him was not gone, in spite of his strange behaviour. "Tell me, what have I done?"

"Oh, nothing, of course. What do you think you have done? You say *I* am changed: I beg your pardon, I think it is *you*."

"I do believe," she exclaimed angrily, "that you never cared for me. It was the glitter of my gold you loved, and not myself. Eh! am I not right?" She was very angry: I doubt if, in the whole course of her young life, she had ever been in such a passion. She felt herself wronged and insulted by the man whom she loved, and the temper which had for so long lain dormant was roused, and she stood there facing that mean-spirited, despicable man, sublime in her passion.

"Really, Miss Powell, you are imputing pleasant motives to me; but if you doubt my love, there is one method which you can adopt."

"If you really loved me you would not now, in this time of trouble, seek occasion to quarrel with me: you would comfort, and help me to bear it. Oh! tell me Edward, did you, do you,

love me for myself, or is your love gone with my money?"

Such a pleading look she turned on him, but he never answered, only looked coldly through the window.

In an instant she had comprehended—in an instant a train of thought passed through her mind, and she saw now everything as clear as the day.

"I see! I understand!" she said, with a vain endeavour to steady her voice, and leaning for support against the table. "I see, you wished to marry me for my money! and now that I have none—— You are free! I release you from your engagement. Good morning!" And she walked out of the room, leaving him standing in his place rather bewildered.

"Well, I am glad she spared me the trouble of breaking it off. It is rather an awkward thing to say; and I didn't want to hurt her feelings, poor little thing! and she was so fond of me! But then, you must marry for money, Edward Ledfir; and no sentimental rubbish for you. You have done the best thing you could for yourself, in the best manner possible." And inwardly congratulating himself, he departed.

And Fanny? Poor child! her face buried

in her hands, and kneeling by her little bed, she was weeping her very heart out.

"O God! why should I have such trouble?" she murmured. "Why dost Thou afflict me? What have I done to deserve it?"

But it was only at first she murmured and rebelled. A quieter, better mood, came to her at last, when her passion was over.

"Oh, my Father, forgive me! forgive! I have done very wrong in murmuring against Thee! Thou knowest best what is good for me. Help me to bear this great trial. I have no strength of my own. Oh, give me Thy strength!" And she prayed on, till a great peace fell on her little troubled heart.

Then she remembered her father and mother, and went down to see if all was ready to welcome them when they arrived.

"Miss Fannybach! what is the matter?" asked Gwenny, coming into the dining-room to see how her darling was. "Your eyes are so red! You've been a-crying! Now, don't ye take on so about it. Missis told me that master had lost all his money; but then, dear Miss Fanny, cheer up, for you have Mr. Ledfir."

"Hush, Gwenny!" she said, putting her hand on her mouth. "Hush, Gwenny! Don't

speak of him. He is nothing more to me—I shall never marry him: but I can't talk to you now. I feel as if I must cry if I speak. So leave me, Gwenny dear!"

Poor little thing! she had thought every one was truth, and now the awakening had come: and, oh, what a bitter one it was! Her unquestioning belief in every one was gone.

Have you ever trusted any one, dear reader, and found that, after all, your trust and confidence was betrayed? And have you not found it very bitter, and that it makes you, for a time, hate and disbelieve the whole world? If so, you can sympathise with Fanny.

CHAPTER XI.

THE journey to Brecon was useless, and Mr. Powell was a ruined man. Harold came the next day, and, laying his hand on Fanny's shoulder, asked her to come out to the glen with him: that same glen where she had wandered often, musing on her happiness.

"Little sister!" he said, sorrowfully, when they had seated themselves beside the babbling rill. "Little sister! I want to tell you something. You know that my father is poor now—too poor to pay for my college education; and I have resolved to emigrate. No, now, don't cry, darling! You see it is necessary. It is for the best, I am sure. If I stay in England, what can I do? I have not kept more than half my terms: so, of course, I cannot be a clergyman. And I cannot be a lawyer, or a doctor. I might, certainly, enter some commercial house. But I must tell you

what my plans are, and why I so much wish to go to the far-off southern land: it is, that I have made a vow that my father shall not end his days in poverty. There, there is gold to be won by willing hands and hearts. So cheer up, sister darling! I shall come back a rich man, I trust, under God's blessing! It is very hard," he murmured, after a pause, "to leave all I love, although only for a time; but Thy will, my Father, be done! Oh, take away all that now makes it hard to say, 'Thy will be done!'"

He turned and looked at his sister, sitting so quietly beside him, and seemingly watching the light playing through the trees, and falling on many a fern and wild flower, and he thought, "She is too young to know much about these matters. She is happy, of course, in the idea of soon being married, and does not care for me." Harold! Harold! how was it that you had never discovered how unselfish Fanny was? And she was struggling with her rebellious will; and while her eyes were turned on the light and shade, her mind was far away, pleading at the great white throne for strength: so little do we know what is passing in the minds of those nearest and dearest to us.

"Harold," she said, at last, "I am very sorry you are going, but I feel it's for the best; and I pray God to bless you, and bring you back to us in safety."

"When I return, I suppose you will be Mrs. Ledfir," he said, cheerfully; but he started at the sight of the little pale face. "What is the matter, dear?" he asked. "You don't feel ill, do you?"

She clasped her hands nervously. "No, oh no!" And she thought, "It will pain him to know it, so I will try and hide it from him."

"There is something the matter, I am sure. Tell me; what is it, little one?"

How she longed to throw herself on his kind breast, and tell him what ailed her! but no, it must not be.

"There's nothing the matter, Harold dear, thank you! But tell me, when do you think of going?"

"Soon, I hope. I looked in the paper this morning, and found that a ship will sail in a month's time; so I must try and get ready. By the by, I must go up and call at Littlewood. I should think Ledfir would lend me some money: you see, I don't like to ask my father; and I know I shall not have enough, when I

sell all my things—my watch and books, and a few other valuables: so, all things considered, perhaps Ledfir will lend me a few pounds.”

“Harold, dear—don’t ask him. I have a little money, and my trinkets will fetch something, I am sure—only don’t ask him.”

“No, no, dearest; I wouldn’t take anything from you; you will want it all: though you’re a good little thing to think of it. But I must go,” and he was hurrying off.

“Harold, dearest, you must not! Hear me. Mr. Ledfir and I are not engaged now; so I don’t like you to ask a favour of him.”

“Not engaged!” and he stared at her.

“No,” she answered, quietly.

“When was it broken off?”

“Yesterday.”

He turned and looked at her, and great tears welled up in his eyes. “I have wronged you,” he said, slowly. “I thought you selfish, and I find you are . . . oh, how much better than I!” And he lifted up her face to kiss it. “Dear, dear Fanny, what a noble girl you are!”

“I, Harold! Why, what have I done?”

He did not answer, but kept looking down into her sad, gentle face. He saw directly what had occasioned the separation of the sometime lovers; and he felt how great was the heroism

that caused Fanny to bear up, as she had done, under the cruel trial. He thought of her manner the night before; how she had never betrayed, by look or word, the trouble and sorrow she was enduring. How tender and gentle to all! how careful to supply all the wants of others! And he thought, "What a little heroine!"

And are there not many such heroes and heroines in the world—quiet ones, who live and die fighting their life's battles silently; with their faces ever turned, like the children in the allegory, towards the distant hills? So poor little Fanny, with her many failings and stumblings, was, I think, a heroine, without meaning to be one. The wise man tells us that "greater is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a strong city." And was not she striving to rule her spirit, and bring it into subjection to the law of Christ? Yes; and none knew, except herself and her God, what a daily, hourly fight and struggle it was; how often she fell and slipped in the combat: but still her eyes were ever raised heavenward, to that God who is strength to the weak.

"Fanny, darling, you must comfort our mother when I go," said Harold,

"I will," she answered. "Poor mamma

feels it very much. I wish I were a man to work; for what will she do now, so late in life, to begin learning poverty? And yet not poverty," she added, cheerfully: "for papa will still have the hundred and fifty pounds from the church; and we shall have the parsonage-house and the glebe: so we shall not be poor, shall we?"

Poor Mrs. Powell was very much upset at the thought of Harold's leaving England. "As if it were not big enough for you, that you must needs go away to that horrid Australia!"

And poor Harold, who can tell the bitterness of his feelings? "Perhaps," he thought, "Beata will be married before I return." And, apart from that, there was the pain of leaving those he loved in poverty. Mr. Powell had been rich before this misfortune came; and now, from affluence and plenty, he was reduced to comparative poverty.

"Dear, dear, how silly your father was," grumbled Mrs. Powell, "to trust that man! What shall I do? What shall I do?" And she began to cry.

"Dear mamma, what is the use of murmuring? God has given us the trial, so we ought to bear it patiently."

"It is very well for you," returned Mrs. Powell; "you, who are likely to be so well off, to tell me to be patient: but it's very hard, very hard for me! What does Edward say about it all? I think he might have come down to sympathise with us. Has he been here at all?"

Poor Fanny, how she winced under each movement of the knife!

"He has been here once," she said.

"Only once in a week! Well, he is not so attentive as he used to be—is he? I suppose you and he had a lovers' quarrel! eh! Well, you'll soon come round again. If he asks, I shall consent to your being married directly, though it will be hard for me to part from both my children."

"Mother, mother!" and the little head was laid in Mrs. Powell's lap, and deep sobs heaved the gentle breast: she had given way at last, and the tears relieved her, poor little thing!

She told her mother all, and received in return a mother's sympathy and comfort: though Mrs. Powell inveighed in no very gentle terms against "that man!"

CHAPTER XII.

"I LOOK upon earth as a place where every man is set to struggle and to work, that he may be made pure-hearted and humble, and fit for that better world for which earth is a preparation,—to which earth is the gate," wrote a good man; Robert Nicholls, I think. And if we would but look on our life in that light, surely there would not be so much murmuring and discontent amongst us: if we would only believe that what is appointed for us will be for our good; that our life was not given us to sit with our hands before us, expecting nothing but ease and comfort, but to work, to struggle, to fight manfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

"Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal."

And, after all, is not the cup of life more full of joy than of sorrow? Look back on your

own life, dear reader, and see if the dark days are not far outnumbered by the sunny ones. We are apt to take our pleasures as a matter of course, forgetting that there is a reverse to every picture, that the bitter must be mixed with the sweet, and that the same Hand sends us both for our good.

"Oh, how very good God is!" thought Fanny, one bright morning, as she bent her steps to Glenkelly. "Thank God, thank God, that He has given me such a love for the beautiful! I may be very sorrowful, but never miserable or unhappy, as long as I can enjoy the beauties of the great green book that He has spread open before me, and can turn from 'Nature up to Nature's God.'"

She stood musing in that little country lane for a long while, thinking of the events of the past fortnight, thinking of the coming trouble, the parting with Harold, and of a thousand other things. She was quite startled when a soft hand was laid on her shoulder and a gentle voice murmured,—

"My poor dear child, I have been expecting you every day during the last week! I did so wish to see you, but did not like to call lest I should intrude on your sorrow."

"Oh, Mrs. Clapcott," replied Fanny, kissing

her, "you never can intrude on us. I have been wanting to see you, too, but we have been so busy preparing for Harold's going that I have had no time. I suppose you have heard of our misfortune?" she continued, sadly. "Poor papa and mamma will feel their loss of fortune very much, I am afraid; and, you see, the worst of it all is, that it necessitates Harold's leaving England—at least we cannot afford now to pay his college expenses, so he is resolved to go abroad and seek his fortune in Australia. We are in dreadful trouble: poor mamma is crying at nearly every stitch she does, and papa goes wandering about the house, and looking, oh, so old! Oh, dear!" and she gave a sigh.

"And what is this I hear about you? is it true, my darling?"

Mrs. Clapcott had seated herself on the grass beneath the shade of an old oak, and Fanny, throwing herself beside her, and tossing off her hat, answered sadly,—

"It is all over, Mrs. Clapcott; our engagement is at an end: it was a great sorrow to me at first."

"And not now, dear?" asked Mrs. Clapcott, in some surprise, remembering with how great a love Fanny had loved Edward Ledfir; "and not so now, dear? What has caused you to regard it in a different light?"

"I cannot exactly tell you: you know that—that he did not love me: at least," she said, correcting herself, "I don't think he *really* loved me quite as much as he said he did. So I am beginning to see that I was saved from a greater trouble, for if we had been married, do you think we should have been quite happy? You see," she added, smilingly, "I am learning to look at things in quite a philosophical light."

"I am glad of it, dear; and, to tell you the truth, I think it was as well that it was broken off: for, as you say, I do not fancy you could ever have been happy with him—he was not suited to you." She did not tell Fanny what she had heard, that Mr. Ledfir was engaged already to another young lady, visiting near Brecon, who had just come into a large fortune; nor did she mention his reply, when asked what had become of Miss Powell. "Miss Powell! oh! I never cared for her, you know: she was pretty well to flirt with, but nothing more. I would as soon think of marrying Mary Jones the carpenter's daughter."

Was it not something to be thankful for, even the

"Terrible awaking?"

And if reproach seemed hidden in my pain,
And sorrow seemed to cry on your disdain,
Know that my blessing lay in your forsaking."

Such were Fanny's thoughts towards the inconstant lover. By and by she looked up into the gentle face of her friend, and murmured,—

“For Thou who knowest, Lord, how soon
Our weak heart clings,
Hast given us joys, tender and true,
Yet all with wings :
So that we see, gleaming on high,
Diviner things !”

After a long silence, and as if continuing an argument that she had been having with herself,—“Besides, I think that it was all for the best. Don't you remember that pretty fable about the man who complained of his heavy cross, and an angel led him into a garden filled with crosses of every kind, and told him to choose one that suited him better; and he tried one after another, and found this too straight and that too crooked, this too heavy, and all had some fault; at last he came to a little old cross, which he tried on, and he said, ‘This is the one I like best!’ ‘That is your own, that you complained of just now,’ said the angel. And I feel that the cross that has been laid on me is the one that I needed. There is a silver lining to every cloud, and I am trying to believe that there is one to mine; but at

present I cannot see it. I must, however, go on believing, for I do feel so wicked sometimes, and inclined to grumble at Harold's going. Oh, dear! why must he go, my dear, dear brother?" and she burst into a passionate flood of tears. And do not wonder at it, dear reader; for before Harold and her parents she was always cheerful, and talked of his return "made of money," as she termed it, and laughed at the idea of his housekeeping. Anything, any nonsense, she would talk, to bring a smile into that dear father's face, from which everything but sorrow seemed to be banished. God knows with what a heavy heart she often talked and laughed; how sometimes "the great lump in her throat," as she told Gwenny, "would rise and almost choke her;" how she had to force back the tears, "for the wells are so near my eyes, Gwenny dear."

So unselfish was she, I think she was right when she said it was just the trial she needed, for since her sorrow she was learning day by day to deny herself, and to take up her cross and follow her Master.

"In a week Harold leaves us," she said to Mrs. Clapcott; "so come and see him, poor fellow! before he goes."

"I will," she replied: "but tell me, dear,

what do you think Harold most requires? for I should like to give him some token of esteem."

"I am sure I do not know," answered Fanny; "he has a gun and fishing-rods, and I think he has bought all else that he wants. But stay: there is one thing that he has not got, and that he regrets very much, and that is his watch, which he sold."

"To whom?"

"To Evans at Brecon."

"Well, I will try and get it for him, my dear. Good-bye, and give my love to your mamma."

A day or two before Harold left he received a small parcel from Mr. and Mrs. Clapcott, and on opening it discovered, to his great delight, that it contained his watch.

The day at length arrived for his departure, when good-byes had to be spoken to dear familiar friends, and he had to take a last view for many a long year of those scenes that were associated with his happy boyhood's days.

It was a lovely morning; one that almost made you believe that there was not such a thing as sorrow—that it was only a name. Harold stood gazing for a long time from his window, striving, as it were, to imprint more lastingly each spot on his mind; and as he *turned* to leave it, murmured a hope that he

might soon be permitted to visit again his native land. The boxes were in the hall, ready to be taken to the carriage, which was at the door waiting. The breakfast was untouched; for no one felt any inclination to eat. Fanny and Gwenny were cutting sandwiches, and packing a little bag full of good things for the dear one who was leaving them. Great tears were rolling down their cheeks, while they proceeded with their work in silence: for how could they talk, when their hearts were nigh to breaking? The clock in the hall struck nine—the hour when Harold must leave that dear happy home!

“I must go,” he said, quietly. “Good-bye, Gwenny! If I should never see you again, thank you, my kind old nurse, for all the care and love you have given me from my infancy!”

He stopped; for poor faithful Gwenny had flung her arms round her dear boy, and was blessing him between her deep sobs.

“Good-bye! good-bye! May the Lord bless ye, dear Master Harold, and bring ye safe back, so that my poor old eyes may see ye before I do die!” And she threw herself into a chair weeping.

Poor Harold was speechless when he came

to Fanny, and could only take her in his arms and kiss her, and push back the curls from her brow, and kiss her again and again. And then he came and knelt before his father and mother, who were sitting on the sofa, crying bitterly.

“Bless me! bless me!” he cried.

Mr. Powell put his hands on his head, and said, solemnly,—

“May the great God bless and keep you, my son, from all sin and harm, and bring you back to us in safety! May He prosper you in all your undertakings, and ever keep you under the shadow of His wings.”

Mrs. Powell bent down over him, and he rested his head once more on her breast, where it had so often lain long, long ago.

“My child! my boy! my darling! God in heaven bless and keep you!” And there was silence, only broken by the sobs of the mourners.

Harold rose, and walked out into the hall, where all the servants had assembled to see their young master for the last time, and followed him with blessings as he drove off. He threw himself, on entering, back in the carriage; and after taking a long look at the old village church, gave himself up to thoughts of

the dear friends he had just parted from, and another far away, more beloved, if possible, than all. Sad and tender were his thoughts during his long journey to Liverpool; and the next day saw him on board the "Falmouth," bound for Sydney.

CHAPTER XIII.

BEATA LENNOX lay on the sofa, in the cool drawing-room at Monckton. Very pale and sad she looked, and her eyes were red with weeping. In her hand she held a letter, which she had been reading, and which seemed to be the cause of her sorrow. A light, boyish step, was heard in the hall; and, whistling a merry air, Harry walked in. He stopped when he saw his sister laying there.

"What is the matter, darling?" he asked, tenderly putting his arms round her. "Tell me."

"Nothing, dear Harry, thank you!" she answered in a low tone: "at least, nothing particular."

"Yes, there *is* something, I am sure. Tell me what it is. Is it this letter that has made you cry?"

She nodded her head. "Yes: you may read it, if you like."

It was from Fanny; and contained the events of the last month, and ended with the announcement of Harold's departure. Harry was a quick boy, and in an instant had guessed the cause of his sister's grief.

"Cheer up!" he said. "Harold will come back, no doubt, a rich man, and it will all end happily. Don't fret about it, Beata darling!" And in his simple way he tried to comfort his sister, and succeeded in doing so at last; and bathed her face with eau de Cologne (when she said her head ached), as tenderly as a woman, until she slept.

It is not often that you see those kind of boys, gentle and tender as a girl towards women, and yet manly, brave, and generous—thoroughly boys with it all. Harry Lennox was, or is, rather—for he is no fictitious personage—just such an one, one of these rare specimens of the boy genus. And so the sorrow which was reigning supreme in the mountain-home in Wales had found an echo in the heart of Beatrice Lennox, in the happy Dorsetshire household. Day by day the roses on her cheeks grew paler, until, at last, the good old family doctor ordered her to Weymouth, to try what

sea-bathing and sea-breezes would do for the delicate girl. And there she would sit for hours on the beach, looking at the lovely bay, and the white cliffs spreading far into the distance, and at the ships tossing gaily in the sunshine, and all things seemed to whisper hope: so she began to hold up her head; and the smile came back once more to her eye and lip, and the roses—though very pale ones—took repossession of her cheeks.

One day as she sat there, with 'Harry and Alfred by her side, she saw Willie approaching, accompanied by an individual "what wears gig-lamps," as Alfred expressed it.

"I have just met him," said Willie: "*et il a beaucoup de désir de parler à vous.*"

Beata greeted him, and asked him "How long he had been in Weymouth?"

"Well, Miss Lennox," he answered, "Monckton is so—uh—dull, without the inhabitants of Eldon Lodge, that I could not—uh—stay there any longer. So I was—uh—obliged—I mean, I thought I would come down to Weymouth!"

"A very pretty compliment, Mr. Smart! Did you mean it for Beata, or us boys?" said Harry.

"Now really, Mr. Harry, you are always

having some jokes — uh — that —— It's too bad ; is it not, Miss Lennox ?”

Beata quite agreed with him that they ought not to tease him so much.

“ Well,” said Willie, “ since scolding seems the order of the day, I will say good-bye. Come, Harry and Alfred, vous n’êtes pas required ; they would rather votre chambre que votre compagnie.”

“ You stupid boys !” exclaimed Beata. “ Now don’t be long ; for we must go into tea soon.”

The boys went and left the two together ; and Mr. Smart felt that—uh—the opportunity must not be lost ; and, like the lover of Nancy, went down on his knees to his lady-love !

I am sure I don’t know how Beata managed to keep her countenance : but she did so, and listened patiently to his eloquent appeal ; first asking him to sit down, and not to let everybody on the esplanade see him on his knees. She told him, when at last he stopped, that she was deeply sorry that he should ever have loved her ; for that she could never marry him. But she begged him to continue what he had ever been—their friend. And then she contrived to lead the conversation to some other topic. And when the boys returned, they found Mr. Smart

looking rather crestfallen, it is true ; but still talking quietly, as if nothing had happened. And they never knew of the words he had spoken to Beata on the Weymouth beach, though sharp-witted Harry guessed it ; but, like a prudent boy, kept his guesses to himself. And so, after a happy, quiet month at Weymouth, spent in many pleasant rambles by the grand old sea, and on the island of Portland, they returned to Eldon Lodge ; the boys resuming their studies at the famed Monckton College, and Beata growing stronger every day, but, withal, more thoughtful. And each day she looked eagerly at the papers, to see if the "Falmouth" had arrived in Sydney ; but she looked in vain.

It is a winter night ; out on the broad Atlantic the wind is blowing, and the waves are beating against a ship, as it ploughs its way through the waters. The storm increases, and the good ship battles manfully with the wind and tempest : but in vain ; and the cry of "*Miserere, Domine !*" is raised to heaven. Meanwhile, in far-off England, the moonlight streams through the window of a room, in which lies a young girl sleeping. Her lips are parted with a smile of joy and love ; and she murmurs the dear name of one who is at this moment struggling with

the Atlantic's waves, and looking up to the stormy heavens, praying for that sleeping girl. The morning dawns on the tempest-tossed ocean; but no trace of the "Falmouth" is to be seen. And its crew: what of them?

CHAPTER XIV.

It is spring now, and the cowslips and daisies are dotted over the meadows round Penland. How different this spring is to the last ! Poverty has set her stern face on all things within that once wealthy home. The servants are all gone, with the exception of Gwenny ; the stables are empty ; the horses and carriages sold.

A hundred and fifty pounds does not go very far towards the year's expenditure, and yet that was all the Powells had to live on. Fanny proposed that she should go out as a governess ; but her father shook his head and stroked her sunny hair, and told her they could not part from her. She must stay with them, and cheer their declining years. And now, in this bright April weather, she sat in her little room, and mused and pondered.

"I wonder what I could do ?" she thought.
"What can I do to earn money ? I wonder

whether that advertisement I saw yesterday in the paper Mrs. Clapcott sent us is worth anything? I will risk it, at any rate; there is nothing like trying." So she sat down, and wrote an answer to an advertisement which offered employment to ladies, realizing from one to three guineas a-week. "That would be a fortune to me," she thought.

"Please, Miss Fanny," said Gwenny, coming to the door, "will you come and help me make the butter?"

"Yes, in a minute. Are the fowls fed? And do you think there will be much butter to-day?"

"I do hope so, Miss Fanny. Lor! it's different times to what it did used to be; who'd ha' thought that you'd ha' come to make butter!" Fanny smiled—a wonderfully sweet smile it was; and now as I look at her I fancy she is changed: the merry, honest blue eyes still look you frankly and fearlessly in the face, but there is a soft, gentle expression in them, that they lacked before; the sunny smile is still there, but more full of tenderness and sweetness than of yore; and the brow is calm and thoughtful. Rare! sunny! Fanny, who could help loving you? bearing your trials and reverses patiently and cheerfully, never selfish, but ever denying

yourself in a thousand little things so as to give your parents pleasure.

You see from the foregoing conversation, dear reader, that Mr. Powell had what Fanny called "a farm in miniature;" that is, he had three cows and a few fowls. The butter they sold; the garden was also productive, which Mr. Powell managed to cultivate himself. Thus they contrived to eke out their little income; but still, contrive as they might, they could barely "manage to make the two ends meet," as the old saying is. Fanny saw, with grief, how worn her father and mother looked, and sighed to think how much good wine and other things would do to strengthen their thin and feeble frames, but money was the bar.

"How I wish I could get some!" she thought, "for they are both getting old; and then, how many wrinkles, and lines of cares and sorrows, have been imprinted on their faces during the last few months! Oh, dear! but the silver lining is behind the cloud, I know: so help me, O my Father! not to repine."

She often—so often!—wished to hear from Harold, who had promised to send some money over as soon as he could; but no thought of danger to him arose in her mind: she thought, "Perhaps he has lost the mail, or could not

write, or something : but we shall hear soon, I hope ;” and thus she mused as she weighed the butter carefully, and made it up into neat pats. That duty over she went in to breakfast, for she was a very early riser, and the butter was always made before the morning meal at half-past eight.

“There are eighteen pounds of butter this morning, isn’t it very good?” she said, kissing her father and mother. “Now that the grass is growing so fast we shall have more butter. Isn’t it a beautiful colour?” she added, taking up the pat she had brought in for breakfast. “And isn’t it nicely made? I hope you will recommend me as a dairy-maid. I am always more hungry on churning mornings than any other ; whether it is I get up earlier, or that the sight of the newly-made butter sharpens my appetite, deponent knoweth not.”

“I should think that it is the getting up early, for

‘ Early to bed and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise, ’ ”

said Mrs. Powell.

“I remember that you used to say that long ago, when I was so lazy, and never would get up. It is a true proverb only in one sense:

healthy it is to get up early ; but where the wisdom and the riches are to come from I am sure I don't know. I am afraid, I am not any the wiser for my early rising, except that I know how to make butter."

"Please, the boy has brought the paper from Mrs. Clapcott," said Gwenny, entering. "And what are you going to have for dinner, missis?" Fanny, who was looking eagerly at the paper to see if the "Falmouth" had arrived at its destination, gave a little scream.

"What is it, dear?" asked her mother, looking at her pale face. She took up the paper, and pointed to a paragraph that ran thus,— "Nothing has been heard of the 'Falmouth,' which sailed from Liverpool in August last, and which ought to have reached Sydney in November; and what has long been feared is now become a certainty, and no doubt is entertained but that she was lost in the gales of last October."

They all seemed at first quite stunned, and then, when the whole sad truth dawned on their minds, there arose a bitter cry,— "My son, my son, my Harold! oh that I had died for thee!"

But the old man knelt down, and bowed his grey head on his trembling hands and prayed, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Beata Lennox soon heard the sad news, and

again the roses fled, and the light step lost its elasticity, and the doctor shook his head and advised change of air.

"Then let it be to Wales, that I may see Fanny once more," she said; and accordingly it was done: and before fresh, blooming, flowery May had come, she was in Brecon with her mother.

After the first burst of grief was over, Fanny, whose nature it was not to stand and look hopelessly at a sorrow, but to try and overcome it, began thinking again of the work she would and must do. Why did they not answer the letter? Oh, how anxiously she waited! At length it came,—"Nothing is known of this at 14 Birmingham Street." It was all a hoax, then, and she had been building so much on it!

"There is nothing but disappointment and sorrow for me, I think," she said, sighing. She looked up; over the face of the sun a dark black cloud was passing, the rough edges of which were tipped with silver, and she bowed her head and prayed for resignation. "I must think of something else," she thought: "what can I do?" She glanced at the walls of the little bed-room, which were covered with drawings. "I have it!" she cried; "I must gain my living by my pencil."

A few days after she went to Brecon, in Mrs. Clapcott's carriage, and called at a shop there, and asked if they could dispose of drawings for her. The civil shopman replied in the affirmative; and Fanny went home with a light heart, in spite of her great trouble.

And now, day after day, she worked hard at her beautiful employment: portfolios, needle-books, screens, and a variety of other things she made; all ornamented by some of her exquisite copies of the views in the neighbourhood.

"One never knows what use a thing may be in the future," she said one day to herself: "little did I think, when I learned drawing at Hern-dale, that by it I should earn so much money."

The things she made sold well, and she had plenty of employment; which was very good for her, as it kept her from brooding over her griefs. There is nothing like plenty of work when we are sad and desponding.

One day Fanny had a letter from her old friend and schoolfellow, Lottie Scott. "I am," she wrote, "to be married next month; if you could come down to the wedding, it would put the finishing-stroke to my happiness, for I am longing to see your dear old face."

Fanny, of course, could not go; but wrote, wishing her friend every happiness: and hoped


that if her wedding-tour lay in the Breconshire direction, that she would come and call on her. This she did; and had just a little peep, a few hours' chat, with her old friend, on her way to Tenby.

"I am very happy, dear," she said; "very happy in the possession of a good, kind husband; and I hope some day you will be equally fortunate."

Fanny smiled and said, "I am a fatalist, and believe that what is to be will be; so I suppose, if I am to be married, I shall be some day, when the appointed time arrives: in the meantime I do not trouble my head much about it; in fact, I have something far more important to think of. Of course, I sometimes think of a wonderful personage who is to be my husband, a person who is quite a hero of romance, pre-eminently good and handsome; but it's all a *château en Espagne*, and the hard realities of life bring me soon back from cloudland."

"Are you happy, dearest?" inquired Mrs. Stone, who could hardly imagine a person happy, who had not a "Mr. Stone" also.

"Yes, very, except when 'sad thoughts come o'er me;' but I always try to drive them away, for it is not right, I think, to give way to despondency: besides, I am so busy now that



really have no time to be miserable. I am so glad that you are so happy, Lottie dear. Do you remember those old days, long ago, at Hern-dale? what a long time it seems since then, and yet it is only two years!" "Two years!" she thought; "what a strange two years it has been to me, and I am only nineteen!" What wonder if a thought did flit through her mind, of how different Lottie's life had been to hers, how evenly the current of her life had flown; those two years, which had drifted the one to happiness, had shipwrecked and stranded the other on a rock, against which the waves were still lashing themselves with fury. Why was it? Why had God given peace to one and nothing but tempest to the other? Why? "How wicked I am!" she thought: "is the creature to find fault with its Creator? does He not order all things aright? is it not for some wise purpose?" And then she directed her thoughts again to her friend, who was talking of "Charlie," and his wonderful doings and sayings.

"Have you heard how ill poor Beata is?" Lottie asked at last, when she had nearly exhausted her favourite topic.

"I heard a little while ago, and she said she was not at all well," Fanny replied. "But she is surely not very ill? there is no danger, is there?"

"Mrs. Lennox wrote to mamma, and said they feared she was consumptive, and that they were going to take lodgings in Brecon, as Beata wished to be near you."


"I never heard of all this! I wonder when they are coming? I do so long to see her, dear girl! I must write and ask her."

"I hope, Fanny dear, you will often come and see me when I am settled in my new house: we are going to live in such a charming little paradise of a place at Longleigh, and we shall always have a welcome for you."

And she was gone, the happy young bride! and Fanny said to Gwenny, "I was to have been married now if all had gone well, and you would have been watching *me* instead of Lottie go off."

"Never mind, Miss Fanny darling; I may still live to dance at your wedding. And Lor! what a time we will have that day!"

Fanny laughed. "I am afraid you will be very old by that time, if ever that day comes! but in the meantime I must dance and do my work."



CHAPTER XV.

"MAMMA, Beata is coming to Brecon! Lottie told me yesterday of it, and this morning I had a letter from Mrs. Lennox: they are going to take lodgings there. Poor Beata, I am afraid, is very ill."

"But why need they lodge in Brecon? why can't they come here?" asked Mrs. Powell.

"Dear mamma we could not afford it."

"But why couldn't they come and lodge here; it would be much nicer for all parties, I should think."

"Oh, I wish they would! but then, it is such an awkward thing to ask."

"Well, I will see about it when they come," and Mrs. Powell betook herself to her knitting and Fanny to her drawing. A few days afterwards, and Beata and her mother had arrived in Brecon; and the next day Mrs. Clapcott drove Fanny over to call on them: the latter

was shown into a room in the hotel, and in a few minutes her friend entered.

"Fanny!" "Beata!" and they were in each other's arms, and poor Beata laid her head on her friend's shoulder, and wept. Not a word did they say about the trouble and grief of the last year, and yet Fanny had guessed the cause of her friend's illness, the cause of the pale, pale cheeks, and the slow step and the lustreless eyes.

"How glad I am to see you once more!" said Beata, kissing her again and again. "You are looking a little thinner, but otherwise not a bit altered from the Fanny of a year ago."

"I wish I could say the same of you. I think you are looking very poorly; but I hope our pure Breconshire air will bring back the roses to these pale cheeks. But tell me how the boys are."

"Oh! they begged me to tell you that they were 'all serene,' and in a good state of preservation; that Mr. Smart was still unmarried; and that you must come and set your cap at him."

Fanny laughed. "Poor man! isn't he married yet? Well, he needn't be afraid of my having any designs on him. He is very well in his way; but he would fidget me to death, I am sure. But where is Mrs. Lennox?"

"Mamma is gone to look for lodgings, I believe," Beata replied.

"Do you know that we wish you would come and lodge with us? You know, dear, we would ask you to stay at Penland; but we are not in the circumstances that we used to be. But it would be so nice if you stayed with us: for if you lived here I shouldn't see you once a-week, as we have no carriage now."

"We were wishing the same thing," Beata answered: "but we did not like to propose it. Mamma will be so glad, as we expect papa back from America; and she wanted to be at home; but of course she could not leave me here alone. So, when she returns, I will ask her. She will be so glad, I know, if it will not in the least inconvenience you."

"Not in the least; we shall be so glad to have you."

Just then Mrs. Lennox entered; and after a little consultation it was decided that she should call at Penland the following day, and make arrangements with Mrs. Powell.

These arrangements were soon made; and in a few days Mrs. Lennox returned to Monckton, and Beata became an inmate of Penland. As yet, in her conversations with Fanny, there was a little restraint: for there was one sub-


ject on which both were silent; and in that case people can never talk so much at their ease. They are always afraid of alluding, in some way or other, to the forbidden topic. One day, however, Fanny, who had felt it, and wished to break the ice, led Beata into a room, and said quietly, "This is Harold's room; it has never been touched: everything is the same as when he left. Look! Poor boy! those pictures he nailed up so many years ago, when we were children—my dear, dear brother!" And they mingled their tears together. And then Fanny told Beata of all that had happened since they had parted at Monckton. And there was no more restraint between them. Once, when Fanny laughingly said something about Beata's wedding, she shook her head, and said, "I shall never marry."

"Why not, dear?" asked Fanny.

"Because — because —— I can't tell you, Fanny, exactly: but I never can give my heart to any one, as it is with the dead."

Fanny answered very softly, "He loved you, I know:" and then she folded Beata in her arms; and they were silent a long while, looking up at the stars, which were hung like lamps in the blue sky.


"The stars always give me a different lesson



every night," said Fanny at last. "I suppose it depends on the mood I am in. Sometimes, when I am very sorrowful, they say, 'Peace, peace, be still: look how quiet we are up here; on how many a troubled heart have we not looked down since the day we were made! Be still, the morning will dawn by and by.' And when I am happy I look up to them; and they always make my joy more pure and holy with their voiceless music. I remember, when I was a little child, I thought they were angels looking down at me, with their calm, solemn eyes. And after all," she added, after a pause, "why should we be so sorrowful? What is that verse? Don't you remember it?"

'Then why should your tears run down,
And your heart be sorely riven,
For another gem in the Saviour's crown,
And another soul in heaven?'

And he is better off now, away from the cares and sorrows of this world." And then she thought of her brother, lying so still and quiet beneath the ocean, with the sea-weed twining round him, and making him his shroud, and many a pearl scattered on his cold bed. The tears were in her eyes; but they were not bitter ones; and the little stars looked in and said, "Peace!"



"Do you remember that verse of Long-fellow's ?

'Be still, sad heart, and cease repining,
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining ;
Thy fate is the common fate of all :
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.'

I think it so pretty,—'*Into each life some rain must fall.*'"

"Yes, it is pretty," Beata answered. "It does me good to hear you talk, my darling. You are so cheerful, and look upon everything in a sunny light."

"What is the use of looking at them in any other light? I am sure the clouds are dark enough, and require a little sunshine. Do you know what I have been thinking? Wouldn't it be nice, if I could get a little child to teach? You see, papa won't let me go out as a governess, and I must earn money in some way or other; and I could very easily teach a child or two. Isn't it a good idea?"

"Yes, very; but would your mamma like it?"

"Oh! I know she would not object; but the difficulty is, to get somebody to teach. I think I shall advertize."

On asking her mother, she gave immediate

permission, and so a neatly-worded paragraph was inserted in the *Ecclesiastical Gazette*; which, in due time, was answered by several people.

"I shall have enough for a school," Fanny said; "but I can only undertake to teach two; and that will be quite as many as I can manage."

So it was all settled that Miss Ellen Jarvis and Miss Clara Street, the two young ladies Fanny had chosen, were to come in July. She was in dreadful distress (feigned, of course,) one day: "What if they should know more than their teacher?"


"Not very likely, as they are only eight and nine years old."

"Well, I hope they will know their ABC, for I will not teach it to them if they do not."

"Come down into the glen, Fanny," said Beata, one day. "I feel so much stronger, and I should like to have a walk."

"And we will take a book and read; that will be nice!"

And they wandered down slowly, for Beata could not walk fast as yet, and seated themselves on the mossy bank by the little brook, near the spot that Fanny and Harold had sat the last summer. It was a lovely day in the beginning of June; the heat of the sun was tempered by a soft breeze, and the shade of the



trees above; the birds sang gaily, and the brook glided on with its soft murmuring, as if there were no such things as sorrow in the world. The book Fanny had chosen was one that Mrs. Clapcott had lent her, *The Mill on the Floss*; and she read on while Beata worked; and then her friend read to her while she took out her paper and pencil, and began drawing a beautiful cluster of burdocks. When Beata was tired she laid down the book and talked, criticising the tale, &c. And then they were silent, listening to the flow of the water.

“What does the brook say to you, Fanny?” asked Beata.

“Let me think: it tells me to hope on; that as its path lies through barren, sandy plains, as well as through sunny meadows, where the flowers stoop and kiss it, and reflect themselves in its bosom, so must mine lie through rough and smooth—the bitter must be mixed with the sweet.”

“It tells *me* a different thing,” said Beata, softly. “It says, that as it is flowing on, ever drawing near to the great sea, so am I drifting on to eternity, gliding ‘to that unfathomed, boundless sea, the silent grave!’”

“Oh! Beata darling, don’t talk like that! You are not going to die; because you have had

one great grief, that is no reason why your future life should not be bright. Don't talk of death, my darling ; you must live, and be our own comforting little Beata."

"I don't know why, but I think that I shan't live long ; and as for one great grief, Fanny, the oak that is torn up by its roots seldom roots again."

"Beata, you must not talk so despondingly ; you are ill, and that is the reason that you see everything so darkly. Look up, dearie ! God is above, ordering everything for our good : don't you know that—

'There are trials besetting every path, which call for
patient care ;
There is a cross in every lot, and an earnest need for
prayer :
But a lowly heart, that leans on Thee, is happy any-
where ?' "

CHAPTER XVI.

As the summer advanced Beata's health improved, and her spirits also. I am inclined to think that it was as much Fanny's cheerful companionship as the Breconshire breezes. Fanny *was* very cheerful; it was surprising how bright and merry she was in spite of all: she possessed such wonderful elasticity of spirit, that she could throw off anything that troubled her. Not that she did not feel things; like most high-spirited people, she was very sensitive; the quick, warm blood that mounted to her face plainly showed that. Harry Lennox came down to fetch his sister, which greatly rejoiced Fanny's heart.

"You are very much grown, Harry," she said to him. "I hope you are grown better as well as taller."

"Now do not mention such an absurd thing; you know I could not be better: I was always the perfect personage you see," he answered.

“With the exception of one thing, — that you know your perfections, and are a *leetle* vain of them. Am I not right?”

“Questions as needn’t be axed, needn’t be answered,” he said, laughingly. “A fellow must, of course, know that he is made a great deal of. Why do you know, Fanny, there are twenty girls in love with me!”

“You conceited of all conceited boys!” returned Fanny, laughing: “you really require some one to put you down a little. Remember, ‘Pride goes before a fall;’ so beware, — take care!”

“‘She is fooling thee,’” said Harry. “You see, I know something of poetry.”

“Certainly, an elegant quotation; but I don’t see that it was exactly to the point: but, perhaps, it is that I don’t understand.”

“That’s it; you are a misty, foggy individual, like Mr. Smart. By the by, did Beata tell you about that worthy personage? I am sure he is going to be married; he has done up his house, and bought a new carriage, and made himself no end of a swell. I asked him the question point blank the other day, and he said, ‘Well, uh — what curious questions you ask, Mr. Harry!’ I told him *that* was not an answer, but I couldn’t get anything

more out of the old chap; but I do want to know if he is really going to be taken in and done for."

"Fancy any one marrying him! Why, it would be misery! I wonder how he would get through the marriage-service?"

"They would be obliged to begin very early, or they would never finish by twelve o'clock. But I am really too bad to laugh at him; as Gwenny says, 'You should never laugh at the foolish, for you may be struck comical yourself.'"

"It is really too bad to laugh at him," said Beata, who had been silent till now, when she took up the gauntlet in her old admirer's defence, "for he is a very worthy man, and very kind to the poor. He does an immense deal of good for the poor round him. Last winter he gave away soup, blankets, and coal, and kept many a poor family from starving."

"I know he is very good, and, I think, clever also; but I am in a naughty fit to day, and feel inclined to laugh at anything. Don't you know those idiotic moods, when everything makes you laugh, and it's perfectly painful? Just as when you are in a tearful humour, if any one asks you to sit down you feel very hardly used, and want to cry."

Beata laughed at her.

"I never have experienced that feeling, and never wish to either, for it cannot be very agreeable."

"I should think not," said Fanny. "The other morning, when I was in the dairy, Gwenny asked me to make some small pats of butter for our own use, and I was nearly crying, and snapped at her, very much to her astonishment."

"Which was very silly, allow me to tell you, Fanny," said Harry, with mock solemnity. "Young ladies should *never* show their airs to any one: I will never let *my* wife do it."

"What a wonderful woman Mrs. Harry Lennox will be!" said Fanny. "But don't you know that 'old maid's children and bachelors' wives' are always something super-excellent?"

"I am going to see Gwenny now; she promised to tell my fortune to-night, and I am longing to hear it."

"And we will go too, for I always enjoy Gwenny's prophecies."

And they all trooped out into the kitchen to listen to the dear old servant, as she told, with a very grave face, "of the dark lady who wanted to get Mr. Harry, but the fair one would prevent her;" and Harry kept on interrupting her with saying, "That's Bella Lane," or, "I am sure that's Laura Marston," and so on. And with

much laughter the fortune was told, and then Harry asked Gwenny why she had never married.

"Lor, Mr. Harry! I said I would never marry unless I could better myself."

"And I suppose the right one with 'the tin' didn't make his appearance?"

"Oh! I won't say that, sir; I may marry yet: but I do think it such nonsense for people to marry the first person that comes. Yes, I do! No, I said I would never marry unless I could better myself, and I will hold to my word; that I will."

"Quite right, Gwenny," returned Harry; "I highly approve of that sentiment: but I advise you to make haste, and I will come and see you married."


"Lor, Mr. Harry! don't ye talk so ridiculous!"

"But really, Gwenny, I must tell you that you have made me uncommonly melancholy. Such a fortune! Why, everybody is trying to spite every one else!"

"Yes, Mr. Harry, the cards do cut shocking to-night; yes, they do. So unfortunate!"

Harry laughed merrily as he left the kitchen.

"Gwenny firmly believes in fortune-telling, and thinks me evidently a doomed martyr," he



said to Fanny. "It's quite depressing. I declare, I feel like a boiled mackerel."

"What a simile!" said Fanny. "You odd individual, can you talk sensibly, I wonder?"

"Of course I can: I am a man."

"Hm!" interrupted Fanny and Beata.


"Of a versatile genius," he continued. "I can be merry and serious, grave as well as gay."

"Well, give us a specimen of your grave conversation," said Fanny; "I never saw you otherwise than merry."

"Oh, indeed," Beata answered, "he can be very serious and considerate when he likes. He is my own darling brother. Are you not, Harry dear? You should see him when I am ill; he is so kind and quiet."

"It's precious uncomfortable for a fellow to sit and hear his praises sung in this manner," interrupted Harry. "Fanny, I know, thinks me perfection, as every one else does: so it is only stale news to her. And now I will talk sensibly, if you have no objection."

What his sensible conversation consisted of, I am sure I cannot tell. I expect it was only nonsense; though he could talk wisely and seriously when he chose, which, however, was very seldom.



"Of what are you thinking?" asked Fanny, coming up to Beata, who was lying on the sofa, looking out into the summer night.

"I was thinking of, and dreading, the day after to-morrow. What a pity it is that people must separate! How painful parting is! One never knows what may happen."


"Yes, that's very true," responded Fanny; "but the Germans always say, 'Auf Wiedersehen,' when they part; and there is that to look forward to, at any rate,—if we do not meet here, we may hereafter."

"Yes, that is a comfort," Beata replied, softly. Then, after a pause, she added: "Do you think that the spirits of those you love watch over you, float around you, and 'are often, often with you, when you think they're far away?'"

"I don't know," Fanny answered. "It is a pretty idea, if nothing more; but I remember long ago, when I was quite a little thing, I had heard some terrible ghost story or other: and when I went to bed, fancied I saw I don't know what: and mamma came up, on hearing me cry. And then she told me that she thought that, when people died, if they went to heaven, they would be too happy ever to wish to come back to this earth; and if they went to hell,

they could not escape from there. That quieted me then, and often did so afterwards. The spirits of the dead may watch one, after all: at least I like to think that angels are near me, day and night. There are such lovely etchings I once saw of the *Pilgrim's Progress*; and one represented Christian sleeping, with his heavy burden on his back; and two angels were standing at his head, looking down so sorrowfully on him; and at his feet sat a devil watching him. It is many years ago since I saw them; but I can remember I always fancied that I was watched in the same manner."

"In these days," said Harry, "what a number of theories are started! One I heard the other day of was, that the air is full of spirits; that you cannot walk without touching them."

"Well," said Fanny, "what I have often asked is, What is the use of them? God, who makes and orders everything for some wise purpose, would surely not let the dead appear to frighten people: there is no use in it, that I can see. Besides, in the parable, when the rich man wanted Lazarus to go and warn his brethren, Abraham would not allow it. But certainly you hear such a number of ghost stories here, that it's almost impossible to  believing some of them. Gwenny would

tell you them by the dozen. Some enough to make your hair stand on end. It is of no use to tell her that it is all fancy; that corpse-candles are will-o'-the-wisps; that owls are quite as likely to screech, and dogs to howl, when nothing is going to happen; she shakes her head, and says that nothing will make *her* change her opinion."

"I am sure she is quite welcome to keep it, if she likes; but I would much rather disbelieve all that kind of thing, for it would make one so miserable fancying everything is a 'token.'"

"They are dreadfully superstitious abroad," said Beata. "I remember going one night to a hill near the town where I was staying with a gentleman and lady: the gentleman was a Pole, and related such wonderful ghost stories that it made me feel quite nervous."

"I think it is half because they are told at night that people take them in so: a ghost story in broad daylight every one would laugh at," said Harry. "But let us have something more cheerful; sing us a song, Fanny, there is a dear girl."

Fanny sat down, and played and sang; and when Mr. and Mrs. Powell joined the party Harry sang comic songs, and kept them in

roar of laughter till bed-time. How grateful Fanny was to him! It was the first real hearty laugh her father had had since his misfortunes. Those dear parents were ever Fanny's chief thought; and to see the smile on their faces once again made her very happy, and she went to bed with a lighter heart than she had done for many a long day.

CHAPTER XVII.

"CLARA dear, do attend to what I am saying, and not look out of the window; there will be plenty of time for that when you have finished your lessons."

"But I am *so* tired, Miss Powell; mayn't I just go for a run round the garden? Do say yes."

"No, dear! really I cannot allow you, you have been so very troublesome this morning."

Clara pouted. "I am sure I did my very best: but I hate sums!" And she stamped her foot passionately on the floor.

"I do not think you did your very best, and you are very naughty now; so be quiet, and do not make any more fuss about it: that sum *must* be done!"

When Miss Powell said *must*, the children knew the thing was to be done. Such different

characters these two pupils of Fanny possessed. They both loved her dearly—as who did not?—but that was the only thing they resembled each other in. Ellen Jarvis, the elder, was so quiet and gentle—very slow, indeed, in learning, but tractable and obedient. Clara Street was, on the contrary, wild, noisy, and passionate; but very clever when she was attentive—which was very seldom, as Fanny knew to her cost. When she first came, everything she was told to do she disobeyed. She gave Fanny an immensity of trouble; but the latter won her over at last by the power of love; and she was much better now, though still very naughty at times.

“Have you finished?” asked Fanny.

“No, not yet, Miss Powell. I shall *never* do it.”


“Come here, and tell me what it is you find so difficult.”

“This,” said Clara,—“how many times 8 goes in 36.”

“Think a little. Come now, dear!” And she put her arm round the child.

“Four times and four over,” said Clara, after thinking a little time.

“Yes, of course. Now, why need you have been so naughty, and gone into a passion?



You should try and overcome your temper. It's very sinful."

"But I can't be good-tempered, like you. Besides ——"

"Besides, I have never any division sums to do? Well, dear, if I have not sums, I have things quite as difficult to learn. But do you know that, when I was your age, I never liked arithmetic; so I can sympathise with you in your trouble in learning: but still, at every little thing you should not give up and say, 'I can't:' that will never make you a great woman. 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.' You will never learn anything if you do not; for everything requires patience: nothing comes without work."

"I like Miss Powell so," said Clara, when the former had left the room. "She never laughs at me when I am in trouble, and Miss Grey always did; and that used to make me so cross. She said, 'What will you do when you are grown up, if you mind such trifles now?' But Miss Powell seems to think that they *are* troubles; and that's a comfort."

"Miss Powell is very kind, and we ought to try not to give her so much trouble," said quiet Ellen.


"You! you never give her much trouble,"

answered Clara. "It is only me. I am the naughty one."

"Oh, but I am so dull! I can't understand things quickly, like you can: and she is so kind, and never scolds and slaps me.'

"I should like uncommonly to see her slap any one," said Clara, laughingly; and then she settled down to her lessons.

How many people treat children's troubles in the way Clara's former governess had done! It is not so very long ago since I was a child, and I can remember that the trials I had then were as great, if not greater, than those I have had since. Children have not the strength of mind and character to help them bear their troubles. They have to endure the caprices of their elders, and to learn things which give them many a head and heartache, without seeing the use of it all. True, the sorrows of childhood are soon forgotten. The tears are quickly dried; but I think that, at the time, they are just as hard to bear as ours: so we should be gentle with them, remembering that once *we* cried because our lesson was too difficult, or that we were refused something on which we had set our little hearts. Each one has his cross to bear, whether old or young: and it is the duty of every Christian "to bear



each other's burden, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

When Fanny left the children she went to speak to her mother, whom she found in the drawing-room.

"Mamma," she said, "I think of going for a long walk, as it is such a fine day: so can we have dinner soon?"

"Yes, dear; certainly: but where are you going?"

"Well, I think I shall do as Gwenny says, and follow my nose. I remember saying that once, and somebody said, 'Well, then, you'll go skywards.' Wasn't it rude?"

"Yes; for I don't see that your nose is turned up. It is a very good nose, I am sure."

"Never mind; a *nez retroussé* is very much admired, and people who possess them get through the world better than those with straight look-at-the-ground ones. Besides, they are so useful at pic-nics to hang tea-kettles on."

"My dear Fanny, how you talk!"

"Well, mamma dearie, my tongue was given me for that purpose, I suppose: and besides, I feel so very happy now that spring is come."

And she danced out of the room singing. She was not the least altered in her manner; still merry and light-hearted, innocent and careless as a child, no one would have imagined when looking at her that she had gone through so much trouble and sorrow. Dear little Fanny, how beloved you were by rich and poor! how many murmured "God bless you!" as you passed lightly on your way. Bright, happy girl! happy, because you had a spring of gladness within your own young heart—because you were a Christian.

"Tell us a story, Miss Powell," said Clara, when they had started on their expedition.

"Yes, do, please," echoed Ellen.

"What shall I tell you? let me see."

"Oh, do make up one! those are the prettiest; you do tell such lovely stories," said Clara.

Fanny thought a few moments, and then began,—

" 'I wish I were not so small,' said a little daisy, who had just opened its pink eye to the morning sun. 'I am so mean and insignificant; so ugly, too,—only white, with a yellow spot in the middle. Now I wish I were like the beautiful tulip, that every one *must* take notice of; so handsome as it is. Nobody, of


course, looks at me ; but steps on me generally. Oh dear, I wish I were not so small !’

“ ‘ What is the use of wishing that ? ’ said a fly, who was sipping the dew from the daisy’s cup. ‘ You are not so handsome as the tulip, it is true : but then, I dare say he wants to be something else. In fact, he looks very cross and proud this morning. I wouldn’t go near him. I wouldn’t care about having gay colours. I would rather be a nice little flower, like you.’ And he kissed her cheek softly.

“ ‘ Don’t preach to me ! you are but a silly little fly after all ; and, therefore, cannot understand and sympathise with me.’

“ ‘ But then, I don’t see what is the use of wishing ; you will always remain as you are : so I should think it would be much better to look good-tempered over it, and to enjoy yourself, than to stay pouting there.’

“ Now little Miss Daisy was very naughty, and thought it was exceedingly rude of the fly to talk to her in that impertinent manner, and she begged him to leave her ; and she looked so discontented all day, that not even a gnat came to rest and refresh himself in her little cup. She was saying all the time to herself, ‘ I wish I were not so small ! ’ But by and by she heard voices ; and looking up, she saw a gentleman



and two children—a boy and a girl—approaching. She listened, and she heard the gentleman saying,—

“ ‘ Yes, the tulip is a very handsome flower ; such bright, beautiful colours ! ’ How her heart beat with envy ! ‘ But, my dear children, ’ the gentleman continued, ‘ you should never form conclusions from hasty glances ; always inquire before you do. The tulip is far from being the most beautiful flower in the garden ; here is one that equals if not excels it : ’ and he stooped down to the daisy. ‘ Look, my dears ! ’ he continued, ‘ look how beautifully this flower is made ! See this wonderful yellow spot in the centre ! if you examine it, you will see that it is composed of quantities of minute flowers, all as perfect as the tulip that flaunts yonder. ’

“ ‘ How very wise God must be ! ’ said the little boy, reverently ; ‘ who would have imagined that so much skill was required to make a little daisy ! ’

“ ‘ Well, ’ thought the daisy, as they passed on, ‘ I am not so insignificant, after all ; but I don’t think I deserve to be praised, for I have been so discontented all day. ’ And then she lifted her head and looked up to the blue sky, and thought of God who had made her so beau-

tiful, although she was so small. And in the evening, just before she went to sleep, the fly came to wish her good night; and she said, in a sleepy voice,—

“ ‘ I was very naughty this morning; I was wrong, and you were right: but I won’t be cross again’—and then she folded her petals and went to sleep, and dreamt that some one said she might be the tulip if she liked; and she answered, ‘ No; I would rather be as I am: for God knows best, who has made me so wonderfully!’ ”

“ Thank you, thank you, dear Miss Powell!” said Clara. “ What a very pretty story!”

“ But I want you to see the moral of it: now tell me what you think it is.”

The two children thought, and then quiet Ellen said, “ Is it that there is nothing too small to be taken notice of?”

“ A good answer, dear Nellie,” Fanny replied. “ But I will tell you what it is,—that we ought never to be discontented and envious. God, who has made us, knows best what is good for us; and has placed us in the station and circumstances that suit us best.”

Perhaps she had told the story as much to teach herself as the children; for sometimes she was not happy, and she would feel inclined

to repine. And thus it was to-day, for she walked on while the children ran about gathering flowers, or chasing the few butterflies that had yet appeared; and thought, "Only this time two years how happy I was! This was the day that I received the invitation from Beata, and that Edward Ledfir proposed to me. Poor Edward! I fancy after all, though, that I am happier than he is."

She had often met him since their engagement had been broken off, and had spoken to him as if he had never been her first love; as if he were almost a stranger. She knew that he would soon lead another to that home of which he used to whisper she would be the brightest ornament. She wondered if he had ever said the same things to his new love: and if, when saying them, he thought of her and the old days.

By and by, however, she thought, "I have been talking about discontent, and have never taken the lesson home to myself. Surely there is something lovely and pleasant to be found in everything, and why should I repine at the lot God has given me? It is very pleasant still, and I am very happy; excepting sometimes, when I am wicked and discontented."

‘Be still, sad heart, and cease repining;
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.’”

And thus the days passed on, and brought with them another lover to Fanny. A fine specimen of a Welshman was Rees Hughes—moderately tall, with a good-humoured face, beaming with fun and merriment; a gentleman-farmer, somewhat loud in his manners and voice, but good-hearted, generous, and worshipping Fanny with all the enthusiasm of his nature.

“She is a stunner!” he said, in his broad vernacular; “and she and I would get on so capitally together; for she is never out of temper, like I am.”

But Fanny only liked him as a friend. It was in vain he wooed with patience and devotion. He was too much of her own disposition for her to like him as he wished.

“I don’t like merry men, mamma,” she said to Mrs. Powell. “It’s of no use for you to say, he is very kind, and very good, and all the rest of it; but I never can like him. He is very well of an evening; but I like a man who is quiet and sensible.”

“Well, my dear, you will do like an old man told me he did,—‘Ah, ma’am!’ said he

‘I went through the wood, and chose a crooked stick at last;’ and that is what you will do. People who are so very particular, always get a crab at last.”

“And yet, mother mine, you told me once that you had plenty of lovers when you were young; and you wouldn’t have one till papa came; and you see you have not chosen a crooked stick.”

“Well, my dear, do as you like! I am sure I don’t want to part from you; for you are a good girl, and a great comfort to your father and myself: so do as you like, child! But look well before you refuse the love of such a man as Rees Hughes.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was a very fine sunny evening in May, and Mr. and Mrs. Clapcott were drinking tea in an arbour in their garden; and while discussing the evening meal, discussed also their neighbours' affairs, in a good-natured manner, for the edification of a gentleman who was with them.

"A good girl!" remarked Mr. Clapcott, waiting for his tea to cool. "A woman of a hundred! It always does one's heart good to see her merry face!"

"Who is this Miss Powell?" asked Walter Antrobus, the gentleman before mentioned.

"She is the daughter of our clergyman," replied Mr. Clapcott. "They live about a mile from here. You will see her to-morrow, as she is coming here to spend the evening; and then

you will be able to judge for yourself of the 'pet of the village,' as some call her."

"Have you much society here?" asked Mr. Antrobus.


"Very little; all the people live so far from each other, and it is quite an undertaking to call on them," was Mrs. Clapcott's reply. "Tomorrow evening we are going to have a few people here, as it is Arthur's birthday; and I don't think we have had such a thing as a party, or even a 'tea fight,' as Fanny calls it, for a year. You have not come into a gay place, I can assure you. I am afraid you will find it dreadfully dull here."

"I do not care about society now: every kind of gaiety jars on my feelings painfully."

"But should you not try to overcome that morbid feeling?" said Mrs. Clapcott, gently. "Is it quite right, do you think, to give way to it?"

Before he could reply some friends from Brecon appeared, and put an end to the conversation, or rather turned it in another direction. While they are all chatting, let us glance at our new acquaintance, Walter Antrobus, who is sitting somewhat apart, lost in thought. He is tall and slight, but commanding in his bearing, as if accustomed to

be obeyed. His face is noble and dignified, with a melancholy expression in his beautiful dark eyes. His brow is broad and massive; and his mouth, half-shadowed by a dark moustache, is firm and decisive: yet, when he smiles, the dark, stern face, is lighted up with an expression of gentleness and sweetness—yet withal sorrowful, for his has been a stormy life. Left orphans when very young, he and his sister were all in all to each other. They had no near relations, and they clung to each other with a deep and lasting affection. Then Mary Antrobus married an officer in the regiment which her brother had joined; and a year or so after they were ordered to India. Then, war and bloodshed were spread over the land; and one night, one fearful night, Mary North and her three young children were massacred: and in a few weeks John North lay on the battle-field dead, and Walter Antrobus was alone in the world. He sold his commission and returned to England, anxious to quit a land which was filled with so many painful recollections. Mrs. Clapcott was cousin to poor John North, and had known both his wife and her brother; and on hearing of Walter's return to England, she wrote and



invited him to Glenkelly. He accepted the invitation willingly enough; for the old house in Gloucestershire was dull and lonely, and seemed to mock him with thoughts of past happiness, and brought to mind so vividly the form of that dear sister, now lying in a far-off land. In fancy he could see her, as a girl, exploring every nook around, and flitting joyously hither and thither; and then, as he had last seen her quit "the Lee," a happy young bride. And thus it was that Walter Antrobus was staying at Glenkelly, where he had arrived the previous evening. But I must tell you that, good and noble as he was, he was too apt to think too much of his own grief, seldom unbending, except in the presence of people he knew. On this evening, when he roused himself, he found Mrs. Griffiths and Mrs. Clapcott talking of a Mr. Ledfir.

"Have you heard that he is married?" asked Mrs. Griffiths. "It took place last Tuesday. Quite a grand wedding, I can tell you—at least, so Lizzie says; but I did not see it. I was disgusted with him for behaving as he did to that nice little Miss Powell."

"But he has been engaged for a long

time to this Miss Lewis," remarked Mrs. Clapcott.

"Yes: her father died, so they could not be married before. Yes, they have been engaged some time now. I call it so wicked of him," she continued. "You know he proposed to her the very next week after he had broken off the engagement with Miss Powell. Poor thing! has she got over it?"

Mrs. Clapcott smiled and said, "Oh, yes: I think she soon saw the case in the proper light, and felt thankful than otherwise that she did not marry him; for she could never have had much happiness with him."

"Well, I know if it had been our Lizzie who had been treated in such a shameful manner," exclaimed the little Welshwoman, "I would have had a breach of promise of marriage brought against him. And then, for him to make such a good match, after all! Really I am quite angry with the man."

"Will you stay here to-night, Lizzie?" asked Mrs. Clapcott, turning to that young lady. "We are going to have a small party to-morrow, and I should be very pleased if you stayed."

Lizzie Griffiths, a goodnatured-looking girl,

with a broad Welsh accent, accepted the invitation, on her mother's promising to send the dress, &c. necessary for the evening.

Poor Lizzie was dreadfully afraid of the dark, stern man, who sat by himself and said nothing; and it was only when he retired to rest that she ventured to converse with *dear* Mrs. Clapcott with anything like freedom from restraint.

About five o'clock next evening the guests began to arrive; for the Welsh are primitive people, and do not invite their friends to visit them just at bedtime; as seems the fashion in England now-a-days.

A feeling of sadness crept over Walter Antrabus as he observed, one by one, the smiling guests entering: he felt lonely and isolated. All seemed gay and free from care; he alone, he thought, was unhappy: and he felt out of place there amidst the cheerful assembly, forgetting that a smiling face oftentimes hides a breaking heart.

Poor Walter! he was by nature the most unselfish and generous of mortals: yet grief had made him selfish; for sorrow, I think, is egotistical. In joy our hearts open, and we share freely with others our own lightheartedness:

but in sorrow we close the door of our hearts ; and if we do not murmur and fret aloud, we dwell upon it all the more inwardly, and are apt to think only of ourselves, and not of others. Do not blame Walter for musing on his own griefs, instead of shaking them off. Every one does not possess, like Fanny, the organ of hope ; his was one of those dispositions so keenly sensitive, which, like that curious plant, shrinks when touched rudely. Quiet and thoughtful he was, and had ever been, yet brave and active ; a thorough soldier in every thought. A rarely beautiful character in its quiet dignity and self-dependence, in earnestness of purpose, and deep religion : and yet that canker-worm, grief, had eaten into his heart, and made him stern and reserved ; shutting himself up in himself—a hermit living in the world. Lost in reverie he stood by the window, till a merry laugh at the other side of the room attracted his attention, and caused him to look round. His eye fell on a group gathered round a fair girl, with golden-brown hair. He remarked nothing more, for the face was not beautiful ; and he turned away his head. But an instant after Mrs. Clapcott, touching him on his arm, directed his attention to Fanny Powell.

"Look, Mr. Antrobus," she said. "That young lady is the Miss Powell we talked of yesterday;" and she led him up to introduce her young friend to him. They bowed slightly; and then, when he withdrew to the window again, they both made silent comments on each other.

"A cross, disagreeable man!" was Fanny's inward exclamation; for she always came to hasty conclusions on people's characters.

"She is light and frivolous, like the rest of the world, though superior to any one here," was Walter's decision, when he had watched her talking and laughing for some time. "She has never had anything to mar the sunshine of her young life. She is happy, giddy, and thoughtless." And then he roused himself and tried to amuse an old lady near, who pronounced him "a most delightful young man:" for, like a true soldier, he was courteous to women; and besides, had an easy grace of manner peculiarly his own. A sweet voice was borne on the evening air towards him as he stood in the garden, with one or two others. Like a bell it rang clear and melodious, and every word was distinctly heard. It was Mrs. Hemans' well-known *Evening Hymn*; and

though he had often heard it before, the air, or words, or perhaps both, struck a chord in his heart, and awakened many recollections of days gone by.

"Who is it?" he asked, when the music ceased.

"Miss Powell, I know," said a young man near — no other than Rees Hughes. "Hasn't she a stunning voice? No one about here can beat her."

"Stunning is not a word to be applied to a voice," Walter thought, but prudently kept his thoughts to himself, and merely answered, "Yes, a very beautiful voice it is;" and turned to enter the house. Others sang and played, but Walter listened to them with impatience, anxious for Fanny to sing again. The song she chose was a French one, *Le Chemin de Paradis*. Long ago he had listened to his sister singing the same sad song: memory awoke, and he saw her standing before him as of yore, her children round her, and with the sweet smile on her face; and when Fanny ceased he bent down and thanked her, adding, in a low tone, "You cannot think what pleasure it has given me; for my sister, who is dead, sang it long ago. Thank you, thank you; it has done me good."

"I am very glad I sang it, then," was Fanny's gentle answer. "I know what a feeling of sweet, sad pleasure, is caused by hearing the songs of those we loved and are gone. I heard some one sing the other day one of my brother's songs, and can enter, therefore, a little into your feelings."

"Is your brother dead?" was the earnest inquiry.

"Yes; he was drowned last year, on his way to Australia."

The quivering lip and down-cast eyes proved that the wound was not healed, yet an instant after she was beaming with smiles, and joining her young companions in some merry game. She was a kind of mystery to Walter.

"She has had trouble," he thought; "but how is it she can be so cheerful? Any one would think that she never had anything to vex or grieve her: how is it? Perhaps she does not feel, and yet she *seemed* as if she felt, her brother's death."

Poor Walter could not help turning his thoughts again and again on the difference between Fanny and himself. She was the life and soul of the party, full of fun and merri-ment; and he—— then followed some bitter self-reproaches for the past and resolutions for

the future. So Fanny had unintentionally preached a sermon that evening, which did more good to Walter Antrobus than a dozen eloquent discourses, for he was convinced of the soundness and reality of it: for was she not herself an example of its good principles?

CHAPTER XIX.


"NONE the worse for last night's dissipation, I hope, Antrobus?" was Mr. Clapcott's cheerful greeting to his guest the following morning.

"Oh, no! but I couldn't sleep well all night: Miss Powell's song was ringing in my ears," he replied.

"She has a beautiful voice," said Mr. Clapcott, who, like his wife, was very fond of my little heroine; "what did you think of her?"

"I did not speak much to her, but she seems lady-like, and rather superior to the other young ladies here; but I should think all her feelings lay on the surface."

"My friend," said Mr. Clapcott, "you do Fanny wrong. But I do not wonder, for few people estimate her character rightly; frank and open as she is, still no one would imagine the beauty of her mind, unless they knew her



well. She is merry, and I see that you think her somewhat frivolous; but when you have seen more of her you will learn that her cheerfulness springs from her sunny-heartedness. To me she is always a kind of wonder, for, poor child, she has had a great deal of trouble. Born and bred in luxury, with every wish gratified, in a single day her father lost his wealth, and now they live on the small stipend from the church, and what she earns by teaching two children. Her brother went to Australia, and was drowned on the passage out; and the man—I can't call him gentleman—that she was engaged to, broke it off when they became poor. And yet she has never murmured; always bearing up bravely against every trial. Noble, brave-hearted girl!"

Walter thought and said that she must be very good, but wondered to himself why every one made so much of Fanny. He thought he had discovered the secret of her cheerfulness, and set her down as not possessed of acute feeling, and envied her for what he called apathy. Oh! if he had seen that bright young face buried in the trembling hands, while bitter tears flowed down, and heard the prayer for strength, resignation, and help, he would have thought far differently. Verily "the heart


knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy !”

But as days passed by, and he saw more of Fanny, he began to like her better. She was so merry that he could not help smiling, and sometimes even laughed at her little innocent jests and odd sayings. And gradually it dawned on him how intelligent she was ; how noble, and original in all her thoughts ; how impulsive and large-hearted ; and he began to unbend in her presence, and think less of his own grief.

Poor Walter ! his had been a stormy life. Bereft of a mother’s love and father’s guidance, with no one to love him but the sister, who was sleeping now far away in India, fortune had favoured him ; he was rich—over many broad acres, upland meadow, and pleasant moorland, in Gloucestershire, he was lord ; a grand old house, built in the first Edward’s reign, was his home. Rich, well-born, noble, what more did he require ? some will ask.

Shall I tell you ? He was very lonely, and wanted some one to love : love, that priceless jewel, without which a monarch’s crown is worthless ; love—all-powerful love—that makes the desert a paradise, the poorest cot a palace. I do not believe that maxim—time-honoured

though it may be—that “when Poverty comes in through the door, Love flies out through the window.” Love is a heavenly gift; and I fancy many people do not prize it as they ought, because they have never known what it is to be without it. But Walter was one of those to whom Love had been chary in her gifts; and he set a high price upon it, as we do on things that are rare and precious. And yet, though his heart went out to meet Fanny, still, for some reason, he tried not to give way to the feeling. At first he thought her frivolous; and then, when he discovered that she was not, he imagined her vain and proud. Every time he saw her, and felt how really womanly and lovable she was, he tried to find out some fault, some flaw in her character. And each day he loved her more, without acknowledging it to himself; and then a new doubt arose in his mind—she was not a Christian. And musing on the fact, he wandered through the village one fine evening, early in June: the blossoms shone among the beautiful trees on all sides; the cottage gardens were bright with flowers, and some of the cotters were working busily in them. By and by he saw, standing before the door of one of the cottages, Fanny’s two pupils, Clara and



Ellen. He spoke to them kindly, and asked what they were waiting for.

"Oh! Miss Powell is gone to see a sick woman," was the reply.

Something made him wish to stay, and he entered the cottage quietly. The kitchen opened into the bedroom, and through the half-opened door he could see into it. It was neatly, though poorly furnished. A flood of sunshine poured in through the window on the wan face of the sufferer and on the figure of a kneeling girl. The rays of light seemed gathered round her head, forming as it were a glory as she knelt there, with her hands clasped, praying. The words she spoke were simple, but seemed to come from her heart, and Walter listened until his eyes were blinded by two great tears that had somehow got there, and he walked quickly out of the cottage, and never stopped till he came to the common, just outside the village, where he threw himself down.

"Fool, fool that I have been!" he exclaimed; "my heart wanted to love her, and I would not let myself do it! Why did I not obey its dictates? But still it is not too late, I hope;" and with a smile on his lips, and a happy expression in his dark eyes, he returned to Glenkelly.

"What made Mr. Antrobus behave so funnily?" asked Clara of Fanny as they walked home.

"How can I tell, dear? I did not see him," was the reply.

"Why, he walked into the cottage and peeped through the door at you, and then went away again! and I am sure he was crying. Wasn't he, Ellen?"

"He looked as if he wanted to," said Ellen, who rarely indulged in imagination, and was very anxious not to exaggerate or tell a story.

Fanny laughed. "You queer children! I suppose he may do as he likes—mayn't he?" And then she wondered to herself what made him act so strangely.

Somehow she was always thinking of him. She disliked him at first, fancying that he was cold and proud; but gradually she was getting to like him more and more.

"He is so noble!" she thought. Mrs. Clapcott had told her of his stormy life, and she pitied him; and we know the old saying, that "pity is akin to love."

A few days after this, Fanny was busy helping Gwenny in the dairy, and the children were in the garden learning their lessons.

The gate creaked on its hinges, and Mr. Antrobus came towards them. He did not go on to the house, but sat down by the two little girls, and talked to them. Clara was in a very communicative mood that day, and gave Walter a long account of the doings at the Parsonage.

"Miss Powell is very busy, she is helping Gwenny; for you know she is oldish, and it would be too much for her to do everything: so Miss Powell always makes the butter and bread. Sometimes we are allowed to churn, and that is such fun!"

"Miss Powell is very kind to you, is she not?" said Walter, anxious for the conversation not to change.

"Oh, very! We do love her so!" said Ellen.

"And she tells us such beautiful stories, out of her own head; much prettier than those in books!" said Clara. "She is so clever, she knows everything, I think! You should see her drawings!"

"I should like to see them very much," said Mr. Antrobus, who was anxious now to discover everything that was good of Fanny, as before he tried to find faults in her.

"I will show you one," said Clara, rising,

and going towards the house, followed by the others. "Look! isn't it beautiful?" she said, leading them into the parlour, and taking up a drawing that lay on the table. "Miss Powell draws so much, and makes such pretty portfolios, needle-books, and boxes, and all sorts of things!"

Walter started. He could not be mistaken—he had seen that clear, bold touch, before. Only two days ago he had bought a portfolio at Brecon for Mrs. Clapcott, with a view on it by the same hand, he was sure, as that which had so skilfully drawn the sketch before him. Involuntarily he did her homage, and revered her. Here was a new trait in her character. Every day he found something more lovable in her—something which attracted him, and made him resign himself more and more to the sweet enthrallment. Just then, a light footstep was heard without in the hall, and Fanny entered, humming a Welsh air.

"Mamma!" she began, "do you know where ——" And then, suddenly catching sight of Mr. Antrobus, she blushed and said, "I did not know you were here! Why did you not come and tell us, Clara dear?"

"I have only just come in," said Walter, smiling; "and I have been busy admiring

your handiwork here. How beautifully you draw!"

"I am very fond of it," was the answer. "Do you know what place that is intended for?"


"Yes; I recognised it in an instant. But I am afraid I interrupted you; the children said you were engaged."

"Oh, I have finished what I was about, and was just coming in for a book, as I intend to be lazy this warm afternoon."

"Are you fond of reading?" inquired Walter.

"Yes, exceedingly; and would be reading all day, if I had nothing else to do and had books to read. But it is no easy matter to get books here. I mean, nice ones; such as one cares to read. Mrs. Clapcott lends me some of hers. She has the best library of any one about here. We had a nice one once; but ——" She was going to say, "But it is sold now:" but she stopped herself, wondering why she felt so communicative to one who was comparatively a stranger to her. He had, however, guessed what the conclusion of the sentence was, and hastened to offer any of his books to her.

"I have several very good works with me,



and I should be delighted to lend them to you. But what book were you going to read this afternoon?"

"Shakspeare, if I could find it. I was just going to ask mamma where it was," she answered.

"I have a pocket one here," he said, eagerly. "If you would allow me to read to you, it would be such great pleasure."

"Thank you! I will fetch my knitting, so that my fingers may be employed as well as my mind."

Macbeth was the play he chose. He read it beautifully.

"It is very interesting," said Fanny, when he concluded; "and some parts are beautiful: that line is so touching,—

'Wake Duncan with thy knocking! Ay, would thou couldst!'

I should think every murderer must feel like that. Lady Macbeth is a wonderful, and, I hope, rare character."

"Yes; such an one I would rather read of than meet in real life. But Shakspeare is splendid; is he not? His beautiful thoughts scattered like pearls in every page."

"Yes; and his face is one I never tire of

looking at: so noble and elevated, and such a magnificent forehead! He must have been wonderfully clever. How often I have cried over his poems! I never can read *Othello* without tears in my eyes. But if you are not tired, will you read something else?"

"Certainly," was the reply; and he read a little of *Henry IV.*, asking permission to come and finish it the next day. And so, day after day, he came and read to her. That was the happiest time he had ever spent; her quick intelligence, which enabled her to enter fully into the meaning of the poet, charmed him. And she! she could have listened to that musical voice, and gazed for ever at the noble face, so melancholy and dignified. Meanwhile Rees Hughes still continued his visits to Penland, but, though always treated by Fanny with kindness, he still received no encouragement, but went about sighing and declaring he should never be happy without Fanny. His jealousy of Walter Antrobus was very great. "What did *that* fellow want, coming and poking his nose where he was not wanted?" And sometimes he was half wild with delight because Fanny had spoken to him, and not to Walter Antrobus; never thinking that it was from shyness that she addressed her conversa-

tion to him, rather than to the one she loved, lest she should betray herself. . Yes, loved ! for the consciousness was growing on her that the stern soldier was more to her than any one else. She did not acknowledge it to herself, but still her heart *would* beat, and the tell-tale blush suffuse her face, when he approached, do what she would. And in spite of trouble—for poverty is a trial—her brow was clear, and her face wore ever the sunny smile ; yet it grieved poor Fanny's heart to see her beloved father growing more infirm each day, and knowing that soon he would be compelled to give up the church ; and *then*, what should they do ? And those who looked on her bright young face never guessed the sorrow that she suffered when alone. There is a skeleton in every house, and sometimes Fanny thought there were a great many in their home. And then her childish faith came to her aid, and she would murmur,—

“ Silence and darkness, solitude and sorrow,
In combination—can I cheerful be ?
And wherefore not ? since I can voices borrow,
Society, and light, and peace, from Thee,
My God, from Thee !
/

I will not waste one breath of life in sighing,
For other ends has life been given to me ;

Duties, and self-devotion, daily dying,
Into a higher, better life with Thee,
O Lord, with Thee !

Strong in Thy strength, though in myself but
weakness,
Equal to all I know that I shall be,
If I can seize the mantle of Thy meekness,
And wrap it round my soul like Thee,
Blest Lord, like Thee !”

CHAPTER XX.

It was a lovely evening late in June, and Fanny wandered to a common, about two miles from home, to finish a sketch she was taking of the view from thence. But when she arrived at the spot, instead of finishing her drawing, she sat idly, with her hat tossed on the ground beside her, and her hands clasped, looking on the landscape before her. But it was not of the view, lovely though it was, that she was thinking; her thoughts had flown to where they often strayed of late—to Walter Antrobus.

“Oh, dear!” she said, when she had been musing long on his varied excellencies, “how very good and clever he is. ! But I wonder why I am always thinking of him? I ought not; it isn’t maidenly of me to love him: but still I do love him;” and she sighed as she thought how unlikely it was that her love was returned,

and taking out her pencil, she began drawing. Intent only on her employment, she quite started when some one addressed her, and, looking up, she saw Walter Antrobus.

"Do not let me interrupt you," he said, gently; and bending down, he admired her sketch, and his praise brought a warm blush to her cheek. "Where are the little girls?" he asked: "are they not with you?"

"No; they are gone to Gogaya to tea with Mrs. Morgan, so I took the opportunity of coming to finish this sketch;" and then they were silent. Walter, leaning against a tree, looked down at his young companion.

"And I thought her plain once!" he said to himself. "How could I? she is so intelligent-looking, her soul beams through her eyes—and such a soul! She is really beautiful!"

It is a very curious thing with us, that when we love, we invest the beloved one with beauty; not that we actually think them beautiful, but we love them, and everything ungainly or unpleasing is softened down by that very fact.

"You are industrious," he observed, after a pause: "how quickly you draw! I never see you idle!"

She looked up at him with that wondrously

sweet smile of hers, and said, "Don't you know what Dante says?—

'Think that to-day will never dawn again.'


And I feel that I ought not to lose the precious time. It is part of my nature always to be at something: when I was a little child, it found vent in tearing things and kicking the chairs; now that I am older, I seldom can sit for long with my hands before me. I take no credit for it, you see—I can't help it."

He smiled, and answered,—“ Still, you know, many people are busy; but it is idly busy; they really waste their time as much as if they were doing nothing: now *you* are always employed on something useful.”

“ Perhaps every one has not a purpose like I have,” she answered, gently; “ if one has a motive, one can do a great deal.”

He did not reply, but stood looking at her,—looking at the bended head, with its wealth of brown hair, in which the sunbeams seemed to linger; at the slight girlish figure, so plainly, but exquisitely, neatly dressed. “ I must speak,” he thought; “ I may not have another opportunity.”

“ Fanny!” She looked up as he pronounced her name, and wondered at the troubled ex-



pression of his face, generally so calm and grave. "Fanny," he said again, "will you be my wife? I love you dearly—Heaven knows how dearly; will you try and love me a little?" She could not answer him at first, and then he sat down beside her, and, taking her hand, told her how he loved her, and asked again, in a voice trembling with hope—"Do you love me?"

She raised her blue eyes frankly to his face and answered, "I do." Fondly he bent down and kissed her, murmuring, "My darling! my darling! I have been very lonely; thank God that He has given me you to love, and love me."

The walk home in the quiet summer evening, with the moon just rising behind the mountains, and one bright star in the blue sky looking down on them, was one of the pleasantest he had ever had. The hand that rested on his arm trembled a little—it may be from new-born happiness; but the face was calm and bright, and the voice sweet and tender.

"Where can Fanny be?" said Mrs. Powell, anxiously looking out of the window. "I hope nothing has happened to her, dear child! Gwenny," she asked, as the latter entered the room, "where has Miss Fanny gone to?"

"Lor bless us, missis, how can *I* tell? She told me she was going to Cwmunt's Common; but she is as changeable as a cat, and may be gone anywhere else, for all as I know. But here she is! and, I do declare, Mr. Antrobus from Mrs. Clapcott's! What, in the name of goodness, can he want?" muttered she to herself, as she opened the door.

When Walter asked Mr. Powell for his daughter the kind old father replied, "There is no one I would give her to with so much pleasure and comfort as you. I am very sure you will make my child a good husband; but sir——" and the old man laid his hand on the other's arm—"but, sir, you know I can give my daughter nothing; for we are poor. I cannot give her a marriage-portion."

"Do not speak of that; it is a rich gift enough to give me her. She is the greatest treasure you could give any man; and I am rich, and do not need a rich wife: so do not think anything about the money, sir."

How different was this man from Edward Ledfir!

"You say truly, she is a treasure," said Mr. Powell. "A good child she has been—a very good child—and she will make you happy, I know. God bless you both!"

And so Fanny was engaged to him; and it was decided, in family council, that they were to be married very soon—before the summer was over.

“My dear child,” said kind Mrs. Clapcott to her, “how glad I am! You are so well suited to each other, and I am sure you have every prospect of a happy life.”

“Yes; how can I thank God enough that He has given me such a good man’s love!”

Fanny, of course, wrote to tell Beata of her engagement, and ask her and her brothers to the wedding, which was arranged to take place on the third of August.

“He is so good,” she wrote. “Do you remember my admiration of Sir Walter Raleigh? Well, *my* Walter is exactly like him; so brave, and generous, and noble. But I can’t describe him; you must know him to judge for yourself. I often wonder at the difference in my love for Mr. Ledfir and Walter. The former was my first love, and I loved him passionately; and it caused me infinite sorrow when I found him unworthy of my love. I love Walter with a deeper, more lasting love; but I think the difference chiefly consists in that I respect him, which I do not think I did the other. I hope you will come and stay for a time with papa

and mamma after my marriage, for I am afraid they will be very lonely at first. I feel, dear Beata, as though I could not thank God enough for giving me such joy after my sorrows and troubles. After all, there is a silver lining to every cloud, though we cannot always see it."

And gentle Beata read the letter, and gathered comfort from it, though at first a repining thought crossed her mind. Here were her two friends settled for life happily; and she—her love was lying with wondrous sea-weed twined in his chestnut locks, and his blue eyes fast closed in death, beneath the deep, deep sea: but in an instant the thought was banished from her noble, unselfish heart, and she showed the letter to Harry, who just then entered, expressing her joy at Fanny's happiness.

"How glad I am! She deserves a good husband. If he were a prince, he would not be too good for her. I must go and write instantan to her, and wish her all manner of happiness. But here comes Mr. Smart, so I will take my departure, and leave him to your tender mercies. Adieu, my fair sister." And so saying, he left the room by one door, just as Mr. Smart entered by the other. A glance at his face indicated to Beata that the poor man was in

trouble, and she could not help wondering what had grieved the usually placid Mr. Smart.

“Miss Lennox,” he began, “I am in trouble, and I—I must tell you—for I know you will sympathise with me.” He spoke with little of his usual embarrassment, and as he proceeded he waxed almost eloquent.

“Listen! Miss Lennox, with the exception of one sorrow—one great sorrow—my life has been calm and even, without any of the minor troubles that disturb other people. I only wanted one thing to make me supremely happy, and that was a wife. The greatest sorrow I ever had was when you refused me: but seeing it was of no use expecting you ever to change your mind, I tried to find some one who might resemble, though she never could equal, you. I found one at last, a lady at Weymouth. We were to have been married next week, when this morning I had a letter saying she was dead:” and, with a great sob, he buried his face in his hands.

Then Beata spoke quietly and feelingly: “Don’t vex, Mr. Smart; every one has some trouble or other in this life, to remind us that this is not our home. It is very sad, indeed, that she died so suddenly. I can feel for you, I

am sure; for I have had a similar trouble." And then she told him of the sorrow that had thrown its shadow on *her* life, and tried to comfort him with all her womanly tenderness.

"God bless you!" he said, when he rose to depart. "You have comforted me, and taught me to look at my trouble in a different light. God bless you!"

"So somebody else has trouble," thought Beata, as she closed the door; "and I am not the only one who mourns a dead lover."

"What did he want?" asked Harry, as he came in, slamming the door behind him, as boys always do—even the best-behaved ones. "What did he want with you?"

"Come here, and I will tell you; only, of course, you must not tell any one. Poor fellow! the lady he was engaged to died yesterday."

"How very sad!" said Harry; who, with his sensitive nature, keenly felt for others. "How very sad! I am so sorry! I feel quite a wretch for ever having laughed at him! Poor old boy! who would ever have imagined that he would have had such a trial? for he doesn't look a bit like it!"

"He is certainly not romantic-looking," replied Beata; "but it is not always by people's faces that you can tell their characters: be-


neath a plain exterior, there may be a more real vein of poetry and feeling than in many others who have the credit of it. I had no idea till to-day that Mr. Smart had such deep feeling. And he is very good, Harry—very unselfish. We must be kind and gentle to him in future, poor fellow!”

“As if *you* were ever otherwise, you darling!” returned Harry.

“But here’s that young Alfred coming, just when he is not wanted. Alfred,” he said, as the boy entered the room, “elevate your golgotha to the summit of your pericranium, and allow me to point out, to your ocular demonstration, that scientific piece of mechanism that forms the egress portion of this apartment: in other words, there’s the door.”

“You stupid boy!” laughed Beata. “What a rigmarole!”

“Did you never hear that before? It is as old as the hills: besides, it is the fashion now to make use of long words. It looks learned; and, of course, Henry Francis Sinclair Lennox must not be behind-hand in the world. It would never do, sister mine—would it? I have written Fanny such a long letter—highly edifying, I assure you—hoping she will be as good a wife as a daughter, and all sorts of



little instructive things. I hope she will lay it to heart. But as you don't seem inclined to move, Alfred, I think I shall go and have a game of cricket—come!" And he bounded away, followed by his brother.

Beata sat by the river-side, pondering on the events of the day.

"How curious!" she thought. "One writes to me full of joy and happiness of her lover, and the other comes and mourns for a lost one! Such is life! Cloud and sunshine are mingled together, and it only remains with us to trust Him who orders all things for our good."

CHAPTER XXI.

"A PENNY for your thoughts, little woman!" said Walter Antrobus, who had found Fanny one evening sitting by the open window.

"They are worth a great deal more than a penny, sir, I can assure you," she answered, laughingly.

"I have no doubt they were very wise ones: so won't you enlighten me?"

"Curiosity, thy name is man, not woman!" she answered, playfully shaking her head. "They were not very clever ideas that were just then passing through my brain. I was thinking," she went on gravely, "whether I should be happy in the future. I am so very happy now, that I am almost afraid it cannot last. Have you ever had such feelings, Walter?"

"I have not known what it is to be happy for a long while until now, dear!" he an-

swered. "My life has not been the sunniest, you know. My greatest sunshine has been you, my darling! and I doubt not, that whatever there may be of sorrow and care in store, you will continue to be the joy of my life. My little sunbeam, how I love you!" And he kissed her.


"It is very pleasant to be loved!" she said, simply.

She had no fear of not loving him enough, as she formerly had when Edward Ledfir was her affianced. She felt that she did truly love him, from the depth of her pure, young heart. Whatever sorrow and care had been her lot, it had not tarnished the pure gold of her mind, but had rather made it brighter, purified and refined it. Truly might Walter think he had found a treasure; and he said so to her, as they sat together at the window.

"Well, that remains to be proved!" she replied. "I may, after all, be a lazy, extravagant wife, and ruin you."

"I am not much afraid of that," Walter answered. "If the boy is parent of the man, so is the daughter of the wife; and I do not believe that you will ever be anything but good."

"Please don't make me vain!" she said.




putting her hand on his mouth. "If *I* am good, what must *you* be? But come down with me to the village: it is so nice and cool, and I want to go with something for that poor old man that broke his leg!"

The walk down the fields was very pleasant. The hay had just been cut, and its scent was wafted to them as they wandered on. The tinkling of the sheep-bells on the different commons, and the lowing of the kine as they wended homewards, were borne to their ears by the cool, soft breeze, that passed over many a wild flower and fern, bending them gracefully with its gentle breath. The visit to the old man being accomplished, they entered the churchyard; and, sitting down on the low wall that surrounded it, were silent for a long time.

"You said you would tell me some day all about yourself, Walter," said Fanny, breaking the silence.

"Yes, darling; and I will do so now, for it will not take long to tell. I was born in Gloucestershire, at a place called 'the Lee,' of which I hope you will be mistress soon. My father died when I was a few months old, and my mother survived him only three years; so that my sister Mary, who was about eight, and I, were left alone in the world, for we had not one

near relative. At my mother's dying request they did not separate us, and we lived at Admiral Parker's (one of the guardians, who resided in a large town) till I entered the army. I cannot tell you how much attached I was to my sister, we were all in all to each other. She was very accomplished, and had a sweet voice; yours reminds me of hers very much. When I was about eighteen, Mary married a young brother-officer of mine; she was married from 'the Lee,' and then went to reside in Ryde, and of course I made her home mine. Then the regiment was ordered out to India, and after two or three years came the mutiny: Mary and her three children were murdered, and a few weeks afterwards John North was killed in battle. Oh! it was dreadful, my darling. Oh, what agony I suffered! The only ones who ever loved me in the wide world were taken from me. I sold out last year, and have been wandering ever since, till by mere chance I accepted Mrs. Clapcott's invitation, every place being the same to me—everywhere there was a void; so true it is that our happiness does not depend on outward circumstances, but on ourselves. If our hearts are light and cheerful, then we have rose-coloured spectacles on; if otherwise, everything is



gloomy and sad. I was so astonished when I found that you were so cheerful, after all your misfortunes, I thought that you could not feel things; but I see it differently now. It is *you* who have brightened my life, darling, with your gentle influence, and every day I thank God for your affection, for having given me some one to love."

She looked at him gently. "Ah! my poor Walter, you have not had a happy life; henceforth it will be my aim to make you happy."

He kissed her tenderly, looking long at her sweet face. "My darling, my darling!" he murmured, "God bless you, and help me to make you happy."

And day by day those two noble ones loved each other better: he, so manly, gentle, and good, with the impress of deep suffering still visible on his noble face; she, so womanly, cheerful, and loving, whose presence alone first won a smile to the stern sorrowful face of her lover. How she looked up to and revered him! his character was so grand and beautiful, tinged with a melancholy that was however disappearing, now he was in happier circumstances.

Mr. and Mrs. Powell were well pleased that their darling child was provided for. "I am growing old," said the grey-haired father,

“and I am glad to see my child settled before I die.” Mrs. Powell was very busy preparing for the wedding. Every one sent Fanny presents; kind Mrs. Clapcott brought her young friend the wedding-dress—plain white silk—to which Mr. Clapcott added a beautiful veil. Walter was very proud of his little betrothed, and every time he came from his house in Gloucestershire, which he was repairing and beautifying, he brought her some present: generally it was a trinket, or ornament; once or twice a beautiful dress, or shawl, given in a delicate manner, so as not to hurt the feelings of his darling.

The day at length drew near, and late in July, Beata, her sister, and three brothers, arrived. Fanny was well pleased to greet her young friends once more, and they held great consultations about “*the day*,” as Harry called it.

“Who is to give you away, Fanny?” asked Jenny.

“Papa, of course; and Mr. Harris, a clergyman from Brecon, is to marry us. I am only going to have four bridesmaids—you and Beata, Polly Williams, and Jeanet Alford.” And thus they chattered on.

The villagers lamented “that their blessed lamb was going to leave them; not but what he

is a well-looking gentleman who is to have her;" and in their simple way they did her honour, subscribing together and bringing her a work-box, as a token (and a beautiful one it was) of their love for her. The boys were very merry, and made the old house quite lively with their shouts of laughter and bursts of song, spending their days principally in making the girls laugh. What curious animals boys are! they never seem to know what fatigue or care is.

"Gwenney," said Harry, going into the kitchen one day, and speaking in a mysterious whisper, "have you any old shoes?"

"Any old shoes!" returned Gwenney, very much wondering if Master Harry had taken leave of his senses. "Lor, Mr. Harry! what in the name o' goodness do ye want with them 'ere things?"

"I want them to throw after the carriage that Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus leave in. If you have none, I must go and beg, borrow, or steal some."

"Oh, I see, sir!" said Gwenney: "for the moment I could not imagine what ye wanted. Yes, yes! we have too many old shoes here, and ye can have plenty."

"That's all right, then," he replied; "but

have you not tried by the cards whether Fanny will be happy or not?"

"Lor, Mr. Harry, how ridic'ulous ye talk! No, by course not! But Miss Fanny actually wanted to be married at the wane of the moon, only I set myself agen it so, or else she would a' been."

"Why, is it unlucky?" asked Harry.

"Unlucky, Mr. Harry! sure I should think it was! And to marry in Lent, too! They say, 'Marry in Lent, you'll live to repent.'"

"Then I won't do it, Gwenny," said Harry. "Now I have learned two things since I have been out here. Live and learn!"

"What have you learned?" interrupted Fanny, entering.

"Oh, something very important," he answered.

"Some of Gwenny's superstitions, I suppose. I am afraid you are an apt pupil," she said, smiling.

"Now, madame, are you not superstitious?"

"So far, that I don't like to cut my nails on a Friday, or sit down thirteen at a table," she said. "Every one has a particle of it, in some way, in his composition; so I don't set myself above my fellow-creatures."

“Very well argued ! I am glad you have such excellent sentiments.”

“You stupid boy ! But go away ; I want to talk to Gwenny about household matters, in which little boys have no concern.”


“Little boys, indeed ! Won’t I just pay you out for that, ma’am !”

CHAPTER XXII.

THE morning of the third of August dawned ; as bright a morning as ever greeted the eyes of a bride. The sun shone gaily on the little village, making the Wye like molten silver, as it flowed on through the green fields of the quiet valley ; turning every dewdrop into a diamond, and casting its cheery beams into every corner of the old house of Penland. The villagers were all alive at a very early hour : some hastening to finish the arches that had been erected in various places ; others gathering wild flowers and ferns to strew in the path of the young bride. But by eleven o'clock all were assembled at the church, ready to catch a glimpse of the wedding-party as they drove to the gate. What a pretty picture it was ! The summer sun came dancing in through the chancel windows, falling on the kneeling figure of the young bride, and lighting up the dark, handsome face,

of the bridegroom ; the breeze, fresh from the mountains, came through the open casement, bearing on its pinions the hum of the insects and the distant tinkling of the sheep-bells, mingled with the voice of the river ; playing tenderly with the silver hair of the old man, who knelt at the altar, and turned in its sportiveness the leaves of the Prayer-book from which the clergyman read. The service over, the bells sent forth their joyous peals from the old church tower ; the villagers cheered and murmured blessings as the bridal party passed through the churchyard, treading on a carpet of flowers the children cast before them, emblematical of peace and happiness.

The breakfast was much the same as others of the kind : there was a splendid cake, which Mrs. Lennox had sent as a present, and which was, of course, the chief ornament of the table. Walter gave Fanny a magnificent set of emeralds, as his present to her, and to each of the bridesmaids he gave a brooch. There was plenty of laughter at the breakfast ; particularly at Alfred's speech, who, as the youngest present, had to return thanks for the bridesmaids, when their health was drunk. As for Gwenny, she spent the day in tears and smiles. Mr. Antrobus had quite won her heart, by giving her a



new dress, with money to buy a shawl and bonnet for the wedding: she was never tired of singing his praises.

“And only think!” she said to the servants, whom Mrs. Clapcott had sent to help her—“only think what he said to me! ‘Gwenny,’ says he, ‘I am much obliged to you for your care of Miss Powell, and will you accept,’ says he, ‘this dress?’ And then, when I opened it, there was five pounds in an envelope; with a direction on it, saying as how it was for a shawl and bonnet! Yes, I call him a very nice gentleman: yes, I do!”

And the servants agreed with her, and felt the material, and wondered what it cost, till the carriage drove up to the door to take the newly-married couple away: and with many a “God bless you!” and half-uttered prayer, they drove off. In an instant a pair of old shoes were thrown, by Harry’s skilful hands, after the carriage; alighting on the top of it, and remaining there; which performance was received with a burst of laughter by those who stood around.

Then all wandered hither and thither, where their fancy led them, till the bell, or “tocsin,” as Willie called it, sounded; which summoned them to the dancing. Dear Beata rejoiced

at her friend's happiness ; no thought of self ever sullied her generous mind. Have you ever seen, dear reader, one who is labouring under a life-long sorrow, without hope ? It either sours or ennobles the person who is afflicted. Beata was one of those whom sorrow had visited, but had left her more unselfish, more noble, than it had found her. There was a serenity on her brow, a peace in her clear, dark eyes, that made every one turn to her in trouble or joy, sure of sympathy from her. And she bore her trial bravely ; harder it was to bear, because it must be kept in her heart, and she prayed,—

“ O, gentle God ! Oh let me strive alway,
Still to be wise, and good, and follow Thee.”

Dear Beata, with her child-like faith, would there were more like her in the world !

Fanny was much astonished at the sea of houses and the vast crowd that met her gaze in London ; a place she had never visited till now. They only stayed a few days there, on their way to the Continent ; but it was like a new world to Fanny, whose exclamations of wonder at everything she saw greatly amused her husband.

“ I must take my little country girl to the Opera when we return,” he said, laughingly.

"I suppose she has never been in a theatre—has she?"

"Yes, that she has, Mr. Impudence!" was the answer. "She went twice to the Brecon theatre when she was a little child, and was very much frightened, as she thought that two men were really going to murder each other; and she made rather a sensation, by imploring them not to do it."

"Well, I expect the London theatres are somewhat different to the Brecon: so we can go to one, if you like."

"Would I like? Yes, of course, you delightful man!"

"How pretty the ballet is, Walter!" she said, on her return.

"Yes, it was a very nice one this evening; to some people it is peculiarly fascinating. I suppose it is because one does not hear the footfalls; they seem like so many fairies dancing."

"Beata told me, that when she went to a theatre in Paris there was nothing but a ballet; and the one she saw was called *The Butterfly*. A girl was the butterfly, and hopped on the backs of chairs, and on tables, as if she had springs."

"Beata is a very nice girl," said her hus-

band, after a pause; "but has she not had some sorrow?"

"Yes; my brother and she were almost engaged, and she has never recovered his death, poor girl! But is she not good? I am so glad you like her."

"You are not jealous, then?" he said, smiling.

"No, of course not; I give you leave to like anybody you please, so that I may have the greatest share of your love."

"And that you always will, unless we change our natures."

Rees Hughes was at first inconsolable at Fanny's marriage, — she, whom he had loved with all the ardour of his impetuous nature, to marry a stranger; one who did not, could not, love her, as he was very sure he loved! But comforting himself with the thought, that "what can't be cured must be endured," he at last consoled himself, and could talk almost calmly of her, without the red blood starting to his cheek and brow, and the look of pain on his usually gay, good-tempered face.

So the clouds have cleared away, and the bright sun of prosperity once more shines on our little Fanny. Faithful and unflinching in adversity, we shall not fear for her now that luxury

and happiness are her portion. Mrs. Powell, weeping, yet smiling, at her daughter's departure, feared much that she would forget her poor old mother, now that she had a husband.

"No, no, ma'am," said Gwenny, somewhat indignant; "no, no, missis; Miss Fanny wunna forget her mother, I know. Poor Betty of the mill used to say,—


'A son is a son till he gets him a wife,
But a daughter's a daughter all the days of her life.'

So don't ye fear, missis, that *she* 'll be any different to others."

"Well, Gwenny, well, I trust she won't; she has been a good daughter, a good child—very; and I shall miss her sadly. She seems very happy." And Mrs. Powell took up a letter that lay beside her, and looked at it fondly.

"Let me read Fanny's letter again," said Mr. Powell, entering. "Dear child! how silent the house seems without her! Well, well!" and he passed his hand over his brow; "we must expect it; we parents must look forward to losing our children when they grow up. But I am thankful she never married Ledfir. You never told her, Mary, who it was that ruined us?"

"No, Charles," was the quiet answer; "she



never knew. I thought you did not like it mentioned: it would but have added to her sorrow."

"Well, it does not matter now," he answered; "the sting of that sorrow, like every other, wears away in time; and when I look back now upon that period of my life, I wonder how I could have been so fearful for the future. I forgot, dear wife, that God fed the prophet by means of the ravens, and that I should be provided for as well. More than once my faith failed me; more than once I murmured at what I now see to be God's just and wise dispensation." And thus they sat long together in the pleasant summer evening, talking of the days when they were young, and when life lay before them, decked in all the glowing colours that youth ever throws around the future.


"We cannot look forward to a future in this world, Mary," said the grey-haired old man; "but there is a life beyond to which we, beloved, are hastening. A life—a world, in which will be no disappointment; for the reality will far exceed our most glowing conceptions. In this world, even the happiest finds that his dreams of the future are not realised. Something ever comes to embitter the cup which he thought would be the sweetest."

And the wife answered solemnly,—“Yes, Charles; and it is better for us that it is so, or we should love this fair world too well to wish ever to leave it. Truly, Charles, there is a tender Father above, watching over and leading us. No trouble is sent but for our good; as dear Fanny says, ‘Behind every cloud the sun shines brightly.’”

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE steamer was puffing lazily up the lovely Rhine. It had been a very warm day, and now that the evening had come all the passengers had assembled on the deck, to enjoy the cool breeze and beautiful, romantic scenery that opened to them as they advanced. They were passing the Rolandseck, and a lady, gazing earnestly at the lovely spot, turned to her husband, and exclaimed, "How beautiful it is, Walter! Do you not remember Schiller's *Ritter Toggenburg*?" and then, in an under-tone, she repeated it.

"Isn't it pretty, Walter?" she said, when she had ended the poem. "I always think it such a sad story. I am so glad to see the place which Schiller has celebrated;" and she looked silently at the lovely scene, sleeping so calmly and peacefully in the golden light of the setting sun. The Drachenfels, with the ruddy light



tinging its noble summit, and below, the little island called "Nonnenwerth," and the river speeding on its way, with the sunlight catching each tiny ripple and wavelet; it was a scene to awaken the softest and tenderest emotions.


"You admire Schiller, then?" said a gentleman near, whose accent bespoke him a German.

"Oh! who would not?" said Fanny (for it was she); "who could help doing so? I do not envy them, at any rate."

"True, Schiller *is* a fine, grand poet; and so, too, is your Shakspeare. We Germans admire your poet as much as our own, you know."

"He deserves it, I am sure," answered Fanny: "his plays are so wonderfully true to nature. Do you not think so?" And then in that free manner, unknown to us reserved English, they entered into a discussion on the general literature of their respective countries, in which several of those surrounding them joined.

"Ah!" said an English lady, as the conversation turned upon tales of fiction, "ah! novels are the worst books: no one knows what harm they do. I would burn every one."



"I do not see what harm they do," said Walter Antrobus, taking up the gauntlet in defence of the poor novels. "The tales of the present day are very different to those of former years, when no lady could read them: but they are quite different now, and, I think, in many cases do good; while, I am sure, they amuse and edify all. You would surely not reduce us to reading histories and sermons all day? we should get as dry and musty as the old tomes themselves."

"It gives people a wrong view of life. It excites the imagination, and does much harm, I am convinced, to all young people," returned the lady.

"Surely not! Have you read Miss Yonge's works, *The Daisy Chain* and *Heir of Redcliffe*, or a hundred others? There is nothing in them but good, I can testify—nothing but what a child may read."

"It is very different to those 'sensation novels' that every one is talking of now," remarked a gentleman near. "I cannot see the good they do; because, in many instances, they excite one, without leaving any other impression than that of excitement on the mind."

"True," said Fanny, "they are forgotten as

soon as read: there are very few books that really remain long in one's recollection. Now, some of Scott's novels and poems I admire very much: they excite one pleasantly, and yet are tempered by good and noble thoughts. Another author I admire is Anderson. Have you ever read his *Der Improvisator*? his descriptions are so vivid, I am sure Rome will appear quite familiar to me only from reading his tale."

"Ah, Rome! the eternal city!" said the German, who had first spoken. "If you have never been there you will enjoy it, madame. But what think you of our Vaterland?"

"Beautiful it is, in some parts—beautiful as a dream; and rich as it is in legends, it cannot but interest."

"Madame likes legends? Does she know the story of this ruined castle we are approaching?" And he told it with his quaint German-English and poetical expression: told a sad, sad tale, of the husband and wife who loved each other so truly, and of the stern fate that separated them—he to go to the wars, and she to sit at home among her women, waiting, waiting, watching, till one night the tramp of armed men was heard in the courtyard below, and she hastened down to greet

her lord, and beheld him borne in by his soldiers—dead! But ere the summer faded, and the rich hues of autumn fell on the woods, the lady was sleeping peacefully by her husband—both in one grave.

“The old, old story!” said the Englishman: “it is ever the same! ‘Men must work, and women must weep!’” And here the steamer, stopping at —, and the passengers landing, put an end to the conversation.

But later, as Walter and Fanny sat in the twilight at the open window of the hotel, listening to the murmur of the Rhine as it sped on its way, Fanny began humming the air that had been recalled to her mind by the conversation on deck.


“The words are very pretty!” she said to her husband; “but still, they are not true.”

“Not true! Why not?” he asked.

“Because women needn’t weep: they have work to do as well as men.”

“What work?” he inquired, smiling fondly at her.

“Oh, Walter! so much has been said about woman’s mission, surely you know that they have something else to do but weep?”



"Yes, yes, darling! but tell me yourself what your own idea of a woman and her mission is."

She thought an instant.


"Well, Walter, my idea of a *true* woman is, one who is as pure as crystal in thought and deed; frank and open in her conversation; grave, and yet gay; loving and sympathising with all, in joy or sorrow; with a deep feeling of religion, which must not be obtrusive, for then it descends to cant, and repulses instead of attracts; intellectual, so as to be a fit companion for her husband, and yet not a blue stocking, so as to think it beneath her to attend to household duties."

"And her mission?"

"A very great one: on her depends the welfare of the young. She must train them up in the right way. She has to make a happy home for her husband, and, by her example and influence, to purify and ennoble those surrounding her. To me, a woman has a holy work to do."

"Yes, my little philosopher! but how few women come up to that standard!"

"Very few! but still it is well to have a high standard; something so much above one: to have for one's banner—'Excelsior!' "



“ Ah, my own one! you are near, very near your own ideal! *One* part of your mission you have already fulfilled! What was my life, darling, until you came to cheer me? God knows I was very lonely until you gave me your love.”

She looked up at him, with that sunny smile on her lips that exercised such a strange influence on all who surrounded her, and said, softly,—

“ To make you happy, Walter, is the highest aim of my life!”

They travelled on through Germany and Switzerland, and then crossed the Alps, and descended into the plains of Lombardy, visiting Venice, Milan, and all the principal cities in their way to Rome. How lovely it was! Byron has aptly described it in his *Childe Harold*,—

“ Fair Italy! E'en in thy desert what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility.”

Every step is on storied ground: here, some grand old Roman yielded his life for his beloved country; there, the ruins of an ancient mansion recall sad thoughts of decay, and one tries to picture the villa inhabited by some

noble patricians, who spent here the warm summer months ; and Rome itself, on its seven hills, with its stately buildings, its many churches, and old palaces ; and around on all sides the wide Campagna, girt by hills casting violet shadows over the plain through which the yellow Tiber flows ; and then the sky, of that intense blue so seldom seen except in Italy. It is very beautiful and very bewitching, in spite of the lonely, decaying look on all.

One day, as Fanny and her husband were ascending the Pincian Hill, Walter suddenly exclaimed, "Why, here is Clarke !" and hurrying up to a short Englishman he seized his hand, and cordially shook it.

"Bless my soul !" said the gentleman, "who would have thought of seeing *you* here, Antrobus ! Wherever I go I am sure to meet some one I know. What brings you here ? and how are you, old fellow ? It is such a time since I have seen you !"

"I am quite well now, thank you," replied Walter ; "and quite recovered from the effects of the Indian climate. But I must introduce you to my wife My dear, you have often heard me speak of Mr. Clarke." Fanny bowed, while Mr. Clarke exclaimed, "I had no

idea you were married, Antrobus. I suppose you are on your wedding tour?"

"Yes," said Walter, smiling: "we have been married five or six weeks, and intend returning home next week."

"I am very glad I met you. I am only just come from Naples, where I have been staying some time."

"You will come back with us to our hotel, and spend the evening, will you not?"

"Thanks: I should enjoy it very much."

Mr. Clarke was a cosmopolite: there was hardly a place in the Old or New World that he had not visited. He was a most agreeable companion, from his varied knowledge and numerous anecdotes; and so Fanny found him, and was quite interested in her husband's old friend.

"Clarke was in India at the time I was," said Mr. Antrobus to his wife, as they all seated themselves at the window, on their return home, to watch the varied crowd below.

"Indeed!" she answered. "Were you in the army, then?"

"No. I had a tea plantation up the country. Nevertheless I sometimes saw your husband when I went to Calcutta on business. I was there when the mutiny broke out. I shall

never forget that time. It was most awful. Most of the plantations were destroyed, and the owners murdered; and mine was the next marked out by the Indians. The suspense was fearful. For six weeks I slept with pistols under my pillow. I knew not if even my own servants were to be trusted. At the last I got callous, and only wished it would end one way or other—anything rather than that suspense. Then came news that the Sepoys were defeated, and I was saved.”

“How fearful it must have been! Were you not thankful?”

“Yes: the revulsion of feeling was very great. Yes, yes—that was an awful calamity! I was glad enough, Mrs. Antrobus, to leave India, and go home to dear old England again. It was such a rest after those troublous days.” Then, seeing the face of his friend growing sadder as he spoke, he turned the conversation, and said, “Have you ever been in Devonshire?”

Fanny shook her head, and replied, “It is a county I know nothing of, though I have been on the borders of it. Is that where you live?”

“Yes; and most beautiful it is.”

“So I have been told, and read; and it is

famous, too : for many of the old British worthies were born there."

"Yes. But I am such a wanderer, I soon get tired of staying in England ; so, since last winter, I have been travelling on the Continent, and little expected to have such a pleasure as this when I came to Rome."

"When you return to England you must come and see us," said Walter, when Mr. Clarke rose to leave.

"That I will, most willingly," he answered. "I expect to return about Christmas, and will then take a peep at you. Good-bye."

"What a pleasant man !" exclaimed Fanny, as she looked at him hurrying along through the street. "I think Beata would like him, he is so amusing and clever."

"Oh, what a fertile imagination the little woman has !" said her husband, stroking her brown hair and kissing her. "On mischief bent, in the way of match-making, I expect. Eh ! am I not right ?"

"Well, just for the minute I *was* thinking he would be a very nice *parti* for Beata. I wish her to be as happy as I am."

"You dear, good little soul ! But you forgot to mention match-making the other day, when you made a list of what a woman ought to do.

But beware ! it is an unthankful office, and very seldom succeeds, I think. I have seen it at fashionable watering-places a great deal ; and more than once, anxious mothers have cast their eyes on me, but the fish wouldn't bite : it was reserved for a much nicer individual than any of those young ladies. I was nearly caught once, though, I remember. There was such a lovely girl at Brighton, where I was staying ; she was gloriously beautiful, with large brown eyes, languid and soft, and faultless features and figure ; and I, of course, fell head and ears in love with her. I had nearly made up my mind to make her an offer, when I saw her flirting with another young officer, which of course roused my jealousy ; and when I next saw her my eyes were opened—I began to perceive that she was beautiful and nothing more ; and what was the use of an exquisite case if it contained but a worthless jewel ? So I prudently looked before I leaped, and thus escaped the snare."

"But beauty is a very precious gift. It gives one such pleasure to look on a beautiful face."

"True, dearest, if that face beam with intellect and goodness ; otherwise, it soon satiates. But tell me, love, do you like my friend Clarke ?"

“Yes, exceedingly. He has such a hearty shake of the hand. I generally form an idea of a person by the way he takes your hand. There is a great deal in it. Some do it in a flimsy way, as if it were such a great exertion. I don’t like them: they are cold-hearted. Others nearly wring your hand off: they are demonstrative, and so on. Nearly every one shakes hands differently.”

“How do I? What impression did you receive when you first had the *honour* of seeing me?” he asked, laughingly.

“You did it as if you were thinking, ‘What a bore!’ and afterwards I noticed you improved, and seemed to grasp my hand more cordially.”

“Well, to tell you the truth, I did not particularly like you when I saw you first.”

“Oh, I know that without your telling me!” she answered, shaking her head saucily at him. “It is seldom people fall in love at a glance, although the poet says it ‘Rose from the worship, kindled in a look.’ As for me, I thought you a bear; but I soon altered my opinion, you dear little boy! But when do we leave Rome?”

“To-morrow, or the day after, if you like.”

“Very well; for I am anxious to return to

England, and see the little cottage we are to spend our days in."

Walter had never told her that he was rich, reserving as a surprise to her the knowledge of his large possessions and splendid mansion. That he was well off, of course, she knew ; but she had pictured in her imagination a pretty house of moderate dimensions, and so he had never undeceived her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE train rattled into the C—— station, and began to unload its passengers. The platform was crowded with people hurrying to and fro, looking frantically after their luggage; and from this scene of confusion Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus presently emerged, and hastened to the carriage that awaited them. Fanny opened her eyes a little at the magnificent pair of bays that she saw pawing the ground impatiently. The old coachman, seated on the box of the large open carriage, and the footman, who got their luggage, did not at all agree with her previous notions. As they drove through the fashionable town, on their way to “the Lee,” she said to her husband, somewhat shyly, that she did not know he had a carriage.

“I thought you said you would buy me a pony-carriage, Walter?”

"So I did, darling ; and I will bring you into C——, and you must choose one as soon as ever you like."

She smiled, and then began criticising the crowd of gaily-dressed people which thronged the promenade.

"Such a rest," she said, leaning back in the carriage, "after that long journey from London ! How far is it home ?"

"Not far ; about five miles."

As they drove on through the pleasant country, so varied and picturesque, she soon forgot her fatigue in admiration of the view. It was very lovely ; the sun was just setting, and cast its ruddy rays on the range of rugged hills, clothed at their feet with woods, on which Autumn had cast her mantle : but as they advanced her exclamations of delight were more frequent, for they were ascending those same hills : and at the summit the view was magnificent ; far below them a vast plain was spread, dotted with villages, half hidden among trees ; the Malvern hills, their peaks bathed in gold, rose beyond : and far away in the distance they could dimly see the outlines of other mountains. To the left lay the town they had quitted ; and farther on was a large city, whose lofty spires glittered in the sunlight. Fanny

clasped her hands, and large tears gathered in her eyes. "How beautiful!" was all she could say. They drove on for some time in silence, till the sound of "bells upon the wind" was borne to their ears; and descending the hill, they came in sight of a pretty village, nestled among the trees, above which the steeple of the church appeared, sending forth joyous peals in honour of the young Squire's return. As they entered the village, the people were all assembled to welcome them with many cheers; the horses were taken from the carriage, and the villagers drew it in their enthusiasm. Arches spanned the road at intervals; and it seemed as if the village and its inhabitants had put on their holiday attire. And thus escorted they entered the beautiful park; and Fanny, to her surprise, discovered that "the Lee" was a stately mansion.

"Ah, Walter!" she exclaimed, "it is a new version of the Lord of Burleigh. I had no idea that 'the Lee' was so grand. You naughty, good-for-nothing fellow, to deceive me!"

"I never deceived you, darling!" he replied. "You set it down that 'the Lee' was a cottage; and as the idea seemed to please you, I thought that where ignorance was bliss, 'twas folly to be wise."

“ It has been a great, and very pleasant surprise. How beautiful it is ! The park is lovely ! And look ! why, that is a little chapel, isn’t it ? ”

“ Yes ; it was built, I believe, in the time of the Normans, and has a beautiful and perfect Norman arch, about which antiquarians make a great fuss. It is altogether a curious old place ; and I have no doubt it will give you pleasure to look over it, for I know your weakness for examining things.”

Just then they arrived at the house, where many of the tenantry and all the servants were assembled, all eager to look at the bride “ the maister had brought whoam.” The servants feared, as is usual with those who have grown old in the service of one mistress, that the new one would be proud and haughty, and would turn them all away. But Fanny’s gentle and winning manners speedily reassured them. When Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus had alighted from the carriage and ascended the flight of steps that led to the terrace before the hall-door, the people cheered them most lustily ; awaking the echoes that slept in the quiet country side far and near : and Walter, leading his young wife forward, addressed them, when silence was at last restored.

“ My friends,” he said, in his deep, musical voice, “ I thank you for your kind and cordial reception of my wife and myself; it has given us both deep pleasure to see that you are willing to love us, and I need hardly add, that it will be our constant endeavour to deserve your esteem and affection. I have given orders that a dinner is to be prepared to-morrow, to which I hope all who can will come.” And amidst many cheers, and prayers for their happiness, they turned and entered the house.

I cannot picture Fanny’s delight at the rare old house: the paneled rooms, with deep mulioned windows, many filled with painted glass, through which the lingering light fell, casting rich shadows on the old stone floor, the carved ceilings, and massive fire-places, called forth her warmest admiration. She was too tired to examine much that evening, the day had been so full of excitement; but ere they retired to rest the servants were summoned, and prayers were read in the old hall, and with a kindly word to each they retired.

“ I be so glad,” said the greyhaired butler, “ that young maister be married; it did seem so naitral to hear the prayers agen: the house has not seemed like itself since old missis died. How many years ago is that, Mrs. Brown?”

"A pretty many," answered the old housekeeper, placidly folding her hands. "A pretty many, Mr. Jones. I only hope the young missis will be as good as the old."

"I hope so," said the old man, fervently: "leastways she is pleasant to look at; kind o' pretty, I fancy, when she smiles."

"Oh, *our* missis was the handsome one!" said Sarah the housemaid; who had, like most of the servants, lived there for thirty or forty years.

"Yes, she was; and our young maister is the image of her—as like as two peas," said Mrs. Brown, who had been nurse to 'Master Walter,' as he was generally called. "When I took that blessed boy in my arms, I little thought to a' lived to a' seen him married."

"And Miss Mary, poor dear! what a lamb she was!" returned Sarah. "Lorks, I remember her wedding! they hadn't been a-nigh the place for months and months; and then, such a bustle! Oh, my! was never the likes o' that! And how pretty she did look in her white dress!"

"Ah, poor dear! that I should have outlived her, so young and blithesome as she was!" said the housekeeper, sadly. "Pretty dear! how


she and Master Walter would run up and say, 'Nurse, tell us about the lady;' and they'd listen, and ask me questions as I couldn't answer, they were so clever."

"Tell us about the lady, Mrs. Brown," said the footman, who had only been at "the Lee" a month or two.

"Yes, yes!" said all the servants; and Mrs. Brown, after protesting that she had forgotten it, but well pleased to exercise her talent for story-telling, cleared her throat, and began:—

"THE LEGEND OF THE LEE.

"Nigh about three hundred years ago, in this house there lived a gentleman and his wife, and two daughters; they were called Lee, and the youngest daughter married an Antrobus; and that is how this old place has come into the family. The eldest Miss Lee was named Margaret, and she was very beautiful, with black flashing eyes, that seemed to look one through and through; she used to toss her beautiful head when a gentleman came and asked her to marry, and said there was no one good enough for her, who was the co-heiress of 'the Lee.' And so her younger sister, Alice, was married, and went to live many a mile from



here; and Miss Margaret stayed at home, the joy of her parents, who were proud of her, as you may fancy. Well, one day the wind was blowing terrific, and the rain came down in torrents, and a knock came at the door, and a traveller asked to be let in, as he was a'most drenched to the skin; and so, as nobody was ever turned away from 'the Lee,' he was let in. He was a tall, dark man—quite brown from living in foreign climates, as our young master is; and as soon as Miss Margaret saw him she fell in love with him, for he was so tremendous handsome. He told them his name was Richard Longford, and he said he had served in America, in the wars; and he told them wonderful tales of that place. They asked him to stay with them a little longer, as they all liked him; and before he left, he asked Sir William Lee for his daughter.

“‘I do not know anything of you,’ he answered; ‘so, of course, I cannot give my child to one who may be a mere adventurer. However, if you will send me a letter from some one who will vouch that you are what you say, I will give you Margaret for your wife.’

“So the letter came from some great lord at Court, saying that Richard Longford was heir

to a large castle and lands. So Miss Margaret was very happy, and spent days in thinking of, and writing to, her lover. Well, about this time the same great lord, who was a friend of Sir William's, came to see him; and of course they began talking of Richard Longford.

“ ‘Richard Longford,’ said the lord, ‘the greatest rascal in London, going to marry the fair Margaret! And so he has *dared* to forge my name!—*that* will bring him to the gallows!’ And Margaret started up when he said that, and with her great eyes flashing, she said, ‘It is false!—it is false! Richard is not a rascal! It is you who are one, for daring to say anything against him!’—and she left the room in a great passion. She thought that he had said it from jealousy; for he had himself once asked her in marriage. But her father believed him, and told her never to speak again to Richard Longford. So she wrote, and told him of it. And when he heard it, he came post haste down here: and at night beautiful Margaret went out to meet him, beneath the large old oak tree in the park; and her father missing her, went out to seek for her; and by the light of the moon, saw her and her lover standing beneath the tree. In great anger, he drew his sword and killed Richard Longford.

Margaret never smiled again ; day by day she grew thinner and thinner ; and at last lost her reason ; and then it was dreadful to see her wandering about, lamenting her dead lover, and upbraiding her father for killing him. One day she was missing ; and they found her in the lake below, quite dead. Sir William and his wife were never happy afterwards, and soon died of grief. And every night Sir William walks about, followed by his wife ; and a lady in white flits about, clasping her hands ; and sometimes one hears unearthly shrieks in the long, dark passages : and at a certain time the lady goes to the oak down in the park, to meet the spirit of the murdered man."

"Is that true, Mrs. Brown?" asked the footman, when the housekeeper had finished her tale.

"Yes, quite true: the housekeeper, who was here before me, told me ; and she heard it from the one before her—and so on."

"Lor!" said the little kitchen-maid, sitting closer to the under-housemaid, "Lor! how frightened I shall be to go about now!"

"And so shall I," said her friend: "but I be always ; for I have allus heard that 'the Lee' was haunted."

“Have you ever seen the white lady?” inquired the footman.

“No,” said Mrs. Brown; “but Mrs. Wansbury saw it. I shall never forget her. ‘Jane,’ says she, running into my room—I was quite a girl then, and had come here as kitchen-maid, as I may be you, Elizabeth—‘Jane,’ says she, ‘something will be sure to happen; I have seen the white lady!’ ‘Lor, ma’am!’ says I, ‘where?’ ‘In the long passage,’ says she; and she was as white as a sheet: and to her dying day she never liked to pass that passage. Not but what I have gone there at all hours, and never saw anything worse than myself.”

“Well,” said the footman, “I doesn’t say as I doesn’t believe in ghostes now; but hif I did see one, I should believe then: so I ’ope I shall see this here white lady.”


“Oh, gracious goodness, John!” whispered the dairy-maid, looking behind her, as if thinking the spirit had heard John’s impious declaration, and was coming to punish him for his audacity. “Oh! dunna say that, lest it should come!”

“Oh! I haint much afeard!” was his answer, as he lighted his candle. But, stout-hearted as John might be when seated in the kitchen

with all his fellow-servants, his heart quailed and his cheek blanched as he ascended the staircase, and passed by many a long, dark passage, through which the wind scurried and whistled, and made his candle flicker, and which re-echoed his footsteps hollowly and dismally.

CHAPTER XXV.

BUT it was only in the very oldest part of the ancient structure that these dismal echoes went and came. The front had been beautified and altered for his young bride by Walter; and the only sounds that broke the stillness were those of song and laughter. A suite of pretty rooms had been refurnished for her; and it was there, in the quiet snuggerly, the windows of which overlooked the park and the valley beyond, that Fanny passed most of her time. The rooms below were large, and wainscoted; and the walls were hung with grim portraits of the ancient dead, looking darkly and defiantly from their black wooden frames. In the hall there were coats of mail, shields, battle-axes, and a thousand different kinds of defensive and offensive armour; and at times Fanny would take them down and examine the various parts, while her husband would stand



by, explaining or relating some tradition attached to this helmet or that sword: admiring, meanwhile, the white hands that clasped the dangerous weapon, or the golden head and slender figure which stood in relief from the dark armour in the background. He was very happy. The old house re-echoed now with the sound of merry laughter and light footsteps: rooms, long shut up and disused, were thrown open to the sunshine and fresh air, and the house lost its look of sadness and gloom, and Walter Antrobus was happy. His face wore a look of pleasure and content: his mien, though not a whit less dignified and commanding, was more courteous and fascinating: his eye sparkled with gladness: he was an altered man. And Fanny, with her music and songs, her pony-carriage, and pleasant drives and rides with her beloved husband, was as happy as she could be. Walter, with the generosity and delicacy peculiar to him, instinctively felt that she could not be *quite* happy, while knowing that her parents were struggling with poverty, and in a delicate manner contrived so that plenty might reign once more in Penland. Hampers of game and wine were sent often from "the Lee." A pair of ponies found their way down there, which

were kept at his expense; and Fanny, whose allowance was munificent, sent more substantial presents in the way of gold and bank-notes. At Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. Powell came to see their daughter and son-in-law. Mr. and Mrs. Clapcott, Beata and Harry, and many of Walter's friends—such a merry party had not gathered at "the Lee" for many a long year. Mr. Clarke also fulfilled his promise, and proved a great addition to the party. He sang a Spanish song one evening; and Beata asked if he had ever been in Spain?

"Yes," was the reply. "I have been in every country in Europe; but it was not there that I learned Spanish. I acquired the language in Lima, where I stayed for two years. I was there in the time of war: and do you know that the air, or rather atmosphere, of Lima, is so dry, that the wounded soldiers died mostly from lock-jaw, brought on by the climate! Every scratch you have to be so careful of. On the Andes they do not bury their dead: they are turned into mummies by the dryness of the air."

"How peculiar! I am so glad that I am English, and do not live anywhere but in dear Old England!" was Beata's exclamation.

"Yes," said Mr. Clarke: "I have been

through Europe, the greater part of America and Asia, and in many places in Africa, but have never seen any place like England!"

"I am so proud of my country!" said Fanny, joining the conversation: "the noblest nation in the world we are! But have you never been to Australia?"

• "No; but I intend going next year, if possible, as I have a very great friend out there, whom I wish to see."

"Rather a long way to go and pay a visit! —longer, at least, than I should like!" said Beata, laughingly.

"Yes, yes, I dare say; but once begin to have a passion for rambling, and you never can sit down quietly at home."

"Well," said Fanny, with a mock-serious air; "why not try and discover the source of the Nile? That *would* be a great undertaking, and adventurous enough, I am sure, to please you."

"Or explore the wilds of Africa with Chaillu?" said Beata.

"Oh, dear! I wonder how any one can venture there!"

"Well, I suppose it is lucky all do not think alike," said Fanny; "or else there would have never been the great deeds and wondrous

discoveries, if all were like you and I, Beata—home birds. I cannot help thinking what gigantic minds such men as Columbus and Raleigh must have had. I can fancy Columbus setting forth to find the new world. How rejoiced he must have been when he discovered it! And Raleigh, too, with his fruitless efforts after the “golden city.” Great men both were—greater than you and I, Beata.”

“I don’t know,” said Mr. Clarke, musingly. “It is not what we do, but how we do it; in what spirit. Many heroes live, who have never done anything besides conquer themselves—the most difficult stronghold to overthrow, for Self is everywhere: and I think that a man must, to a certain extent, have conquered that enemy before he can ever hope to conquer those without.”

“You are right!” said Mr. Clapcott, who was standing near. “You are right! *those* are the real heroes, those who strive with man’s greatest enemy—himself.”

At this moment Walter entered, and interrupted the conversation by exclaiming,—

“A most dreadful accident has just happened! The night-coach from Ecclesfield has been overturned; the driver and all the passengers hurt; and one poor old man, of the

name of Horton, is seriously injured : in fact, they think he will not live through the night."

"Horton!" was Mr. Powell's exclamation, as he turned to his wife. "Mary," he said, bending down and whispering, "Mary, I must go and see him, if it be he, as I think it is."

And he hastened out of the room. And while the party at "the Lee" were gathering round the cheerful fire, and talking of the accident, Mr. Powell was wending his steps to the village inn to seek one who had deeply injured him. Walter Antrobus, with kindly courtesy, had sent to the sufferers whatever they required ; and as Mr. Powell entered the tap-room of the Lee Arms, in which most of them were assembled, he looked round eagerly for the object of his search.

"Where is Mr. Horton?" he inquired of the landlady, who was bustling about attending to the wants of her guests.

"Ah! poor man," she said, stopping a moment in her work. "Ah! he is the worst of all of them. He is up-stairs, and I guess he'll never come down again alive. Heaven help him! But did you want to see him, sir? Here, Betty, light the gentleman up-stairs."


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Following the girl, Mr. Powell ascended the staircase, and down a long narrow passage, until she stopped before a door. "Should she tell him who was there, for perhaps he might be startled like to see a stranger?" Nodding his head as a sign of acquiescence, he waited outside while the girl entered.

"Powell!" he heard a feeble voice saying. "Ay, tell him, girl, to come. "Charles! Charles!" he exclaimed, as Mr. Powell advanced to the bedside, "you are come to see me, then, before I die? Thank Heaven! for I could not have died in peace without asking your forgiveness. Will you kindly leave the room?" he continued, addressing an old woman who was sitting by the fire, acting as nurse to the injured man. And then, as she quitted the apartment, he raised himself on his elbow, and gazing at the mild face of the clergyman, entreated, "Will you, will you give me your forgiveness?"

"Ay, William, I have done so long ago; and now from my heart I tell you I forgive you, old friend."

"Blessings on you!" said the dying man, grasping his hands. "But my blessings are not worth much," he added, with a sigh. "It is only those of the good that are heard. But



say, Charles, those blessed words again. Say you forgive me all the wrong I have done you during my life."

"I do indeed, William. But think not of *my* forgiveness; think of One you have offended far more than me. Turn your thoughts to Jesus your Saviour."

"If He would save me," was the answer. "But no, I am too foul, too black, to go to one so pure and holy!"

"Nay, nay, William! none are too black to be washed clean by His blood. 'They that are whole need not a physician.' 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'"

Long ago those two were boys together, growing up as brothers—the one calm, gentle, and plodding; the other fiery, but talented. At college they were still together; but here their roads lay apart, for while the elder was treading the paths of knowledge, the younger was following the broad road of pleasure. Then came a time when William implored his friend's assistance, as the demon, Debt, lay in his path; and out of his slender allowance the other helped him, denying himself many things to save his friend. Then, again, years slip on, and beautiful Florence Powell runs away with her brother's friend, causing many an aching

heart in her father's house—for the husband she has chosen is a gambler. Then peace-making Charles steps in, mends the breach, and with many promises of amendment, William Horton is received into the family. Alas! his promises last not long, and again the patient friend intercedes with the justly angry father. A few years more, and Charles Powell is standing by the deathbed of his sister, no longer beautiful and gay, but a heart-broken, sorrowing wife and mother; for the son she has borne is treading the same road as his father; and ruin and misery reign in the home, brightened only by the presence of that beloved patient brother. Again, with many promises for the future, William Horton is reconciled with his trusting friend, who, believing every one to be as true and honourable as himself, consents to sign a paper for an enormous sum of money—only for a few weeks, as his brother-in-law assures him. My readers know how misplaced was his trust and confidence, and how he was compelled to pay the sum, which swallowed up all his wealth. And yet Charles Powell forgave his injurer, forgave him from his heart: he had learned to say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" and he felt no anger,

only sorrow, for the friend of his childhood. But a heavier trial was in store for him. He found that the man who had behaved so dishonourably to Fanny was his dead sister's son. That was the hardest blow of all. But Fanny's first lover's name was Ledfir, not Horton? Yes; but he was a swindler, and was obliged to assume that name to escape his creditors. So you see that this man, who now lay dying, he and his, had caused nothing but misery to his early friend; and lying there with his past life behind him unrepented of, an unknown future before him, what wonder that he trembled! But "that good man, the clergyman, had brought him words of peace." And those words of peace fell like oil on that troubled heart; and when far into the night Mr. Powell left him, he was sleeping quietly. He lingered on for days: it seemed as if the soul were unwilling to leave its earthly tenement, until it had made its peace with its Maker.


"I am weary! I am weary!" he said one evening, as Mr. Powell sat beside him. "'I will arise and go to my Father, and will say, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' Yes, I have sinned, but I

am forgiven ;” and he clasped his hands, while his face was illumined with joy. “I am forgiven !” and then, as the evening grew darker, he caught the hand of his friend, saying, “Pray, Charles !”

And the good man knelt in prayer, while the firelight flickered and flared up in the old grate, casting weird-like shadows in the room, and falling on the silvery head of the clergyman and the gaunt face of the dying man. Slowly Mr. Powell rose from prayer, the hand he held was cold and motionless : he looked—William Horton was dead !

CHAPTER XXVI.

HAPPILY passed away the time at "the Lee;" not a cloud ever shadowed the path of its young mistress; loving and beloved by all, it seemed as if Fortune had spent her storms, and now only cast sunshine on the head of the fair girl. But a cloud just appeared on the horizon, threatening to quench the light of her young life. Hunting was a favourite amusement in the neighbourhood of "the Lee," and none rode so boldly, or sat his horse more gracefully and surely, than Walter Antrobus. One day he rode forth in search of a fox who had been a great depredator in the poultry-yards of the neighbourhood, and while the hounds and huntsmen were in full cry his horse, in taking a leap, missed, and fell on his rider. Those who were near gathered round the fallen man, and tenderly lifting him, bore him back on a door taken from a neighbouring



cottage, to the home he had left but a few hours before, full of strength and life. Without a tear, Fanny ordered everything for his comfort, while waiting anxiously the arrival of the surgeon. Gulping down the great lump that would rise in her throat, she stood beside him while he examined her husband. The doctor shook his head.

"A bad fall! I will not hide it from you, Mrs. Antrobus,—he is in danger."

Silently she listened to his orders, and bore up bravely till he had left; and then she rushed to her dressing-room and wept. "Oh! God—oh! my Father, don't let him die!—don't let him die!" and she clasped her hands wildly, ever repeating the same prayer,— "Don't let him die!" And then came to her memory a story she had read long ago, of a wife who had prayed for her husband's life, passionately and rebelliously,—the prayer was answered, but he became an idiot; and then she knelt and prayed,— "Not *my* will, but Thine, be done;" and with new strength and courage she went to keep her vigils by her husband's side.

"I knowed there'd be summut wrong in the house," said Sarah, the housemaid, as the servants were all assembled round the kitchen fire in the evening. "Neptune howled last night,

oh ! most horrible. I said to myself, 'There'll surely be a death, or sickness ;' and so there has ; and the Lord keep it from being a death !"

"Yes, yes," said the housekeeper. "Oh, dear ! what should we all do if our young maister was to die, and poor missis, too ?" and the old woman clasped her hands in great grief. The servants seemed quite sorrow-stricken by the illness of their master ; tears, and sighs, and whispered comments were only heard, instead of the usual song, or jest, and cheerful conversation. Devoted all were to Walter ; and Fanny, during the short time she had ruled over them, had secured their love : she was so "gentle-like," and they felt for her now in her great sorrow, poor little thing ! How earnest were the prayers that rose that evening for the restoration of the beloved master, who was lying, as all feared, sick unto death. For days Walter was insensible, not even knowing his young wife, but calling in piteous tones, wondering why Fanny did not come to him. Fever had followed, and his life hung on a thread ; and as Fanny watched beside him, knowing not whether he would be alive another hour, she could but clasp her hands and pray. The prayer was granted ; and


at last, joy was restored to the house where the stillness, almost of death, had reigned for so long.

“Ah!” said Fanny, kissing her husband’s brow, “one never knows how dear a thing is to us till we lose it; and believe me, I never knew how dearly I loved you until I feared you would leave me. But, Walter, dearest, promise me never to go to that dreadful meet again. I shall always be on thorns.”

“I will promise never to be so reckless again,” was the answer. “I was so excited, that I did not take notice where I was going. I felt myself falling, — then a heavy weight on me. I thought of you, little wife, and then I remember nothing till I awoke the other day, and saw you leaning over me, with great tears in your eyes.”

“If you only knew the joy! It was a great deal harder to bear than sorrow, to see your dear eyes looking at me, and knowing me again. But you mustn’t talk any more, or you will tire yourself, dear. I will read to you now.”

And opening the Bible, that lay on the table beside her, she read some of the Psalms, in which David poured forth his gratitude to the Lord of all.




Walter Antrobus so slowly regained his health and strength that the spring found him still weak, and change of air good Doctor Ferguson said he needed; so accordingly, early in May, he and his wife went south to Weymouth, with its blue bay, bounded by its rocky cliffs, glistening in the sunshine. They passed also a few days at Bournemouth, that pretty town nestling among the trees, which had just put on their spring beauty, and from whence you have views of "the Garden of England," the beautiful Isle of Wight: the sea breezes brought back the wonted health and strength to him, and in a few weeks he was as well as ever. To Fanny's great joy, he proposed passing through Monckton on their way home, in order to take a peep at Beata. Dear Beata was in a state of great delight, as Willie, who was walking the hospitals, had just passed a first-class examination; and Harry, too, had come home from Oxford for the Vacation; and Alfred, who had been away at the Military College at Sandhurst, was also at Monckton; and the kind sister, to whom they had always turned for sympathy and help, now rejoiced at their success, and entered into all the details of their lives with great interest. Dear Beata! ever forgetful of self, making of

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everyday trials and temptations the rounds of the ladder she was ascending.

“All common things—each day’s events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures, and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.”

After a pleasant week spent at Monckton, Walter and Fanny returned to their happy home; and there, a few months later, they were bending over a cradle, in which lay a baby-boy, who received the name of Harold Walter, and whose godmother, Beata, could wish no better for him than that he might resemble the Harold of long ago.



CHAPTER XXVII.

It is New-year's day, 1863, and the fire burns brightly in the drawing-room at Penland, as if in defiance of the wind and cold out of doors. The curtains are drawn, but the lamp is not yet lit ; and the happy party, gathered round the hearth, sit by the flickering fire-light. In the arm-chair, with his white head resting against the cushioned back, sits Mr. Powell. A look of calm content is on his high forehead, wrinkled by many a care—the ghosts, the remembrance only, of which, now remain : for the evening of his days is bright and unclouded. Opposite to him is the mother, with her black hair, now mixed with many a silver thread, parted over her brow ; while the eyes beneath are gazing into the fire, which sends back a flash of light, showing that tears are

resting on the lashes which shade them: for the mother is thinking of her boy, lying so cold and quiet beneath the waters of the Atlantic, wishing the vain wish that he were there too, to enliven with his merry face and pleasant laugh the family party.

In the centre there is a pretty group: Walter Antrobus, his noble face beaming with happiness, looking with pride and affection at his young wife, who, in turn, is bending over, with a face enwreathed in smiles, her baby-boy, making him laugh and crow, and occasionally talking that nonsense people always think necessary to address to children.

"He is a darling! isn't he, mamma?" she said, turning to her mother.

"He is, dear; and such a fine boy, too! He puts me in mind of poor Harold when he was a baby!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Powell, "I only hope he will be as good and as self-denying as our poor boy was!"

"Beata and I, long ago, wondered if the souls of those we love hover round us," said Fanny, thoughtfully. "It would be pleasant to feel that those dear eyes were looking at us now; to think that, for an instant, he had left his Father's home to visit us again."


“ ‘ Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit’s voiceless prayer ;
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from his lips of air,’

said Walter, gently.

“ It is a pretty thought, and if it comforts us to fancy it there can be no harm in it.”

And then there was a pause, each lost in thought: the father, thinking with pride of the noble son, who had left his native land to repair their fallen fortunes—thinking of the events of his own life, weighing and balancing every action, and silently giving thanks to the God who had ordered all things for the best. And the mother is fancying that again she is a young bride, coming to that mountain home full of joy for the future, and sees again the fair-haired boy, who came to gladden their hearts with his merry gambols. And she sees others, too—shadowy forms, that stayed with her but a little while, and are lying in yonder quiet churchyard, with daisies growing over their tiny graves; and she sees again the wee baby-girl, the only one left to her now of all her children. And her thoughts wandered on, and she saw the boy, now grown a man, with his broad, noble brow, full of intellect, and the eye beneath replete with good-

ness and frankness; and then she lived over again that sad, sad morning, when her eyes rested for the last time on that dear face; and she pictured to herself the shipwreck, with the waters surging and foaming, and her brave boy struggling vainly with the fierce waves; and then she covered her face with her hands and wept: for there are some wounds which never heal, some graves over which tears are wept daily. And Walter sat there, too, with his arms crossed, looking straight into the fire, building scenes and faces out of the glowing coals, and ever and anon seeing a sweet face coming out to him from the shadowy past, and hearing a gentle voice calling him, "Brother!" while Fanny is lifting her heart in gratitude to her heavenly Father, who had showered so many mercies and blessings on her: and the baby-boy on her knee is gazing into his mother's face, thinking, I suppose, wise baby thoughts. The fire flickers and flares on the group gathered round it; and without, the wind howls mournfully through the old trees, beating in fury against the windows of the house; and now, shrieking wildly, flies, like an uneasy spirit, away to the hills. Gwenny comes in presently, and breaks the silence, by asking if she shall light the lamp



and bring in tea. And while she bustles in and out, tells Fanny bits of news about the village.

"Ye remember Jemmy Smith, the little un ye allays liked so, Miss Fanny?" for Gwenny still called her Miss Fanny. "Mrs. Antrobus was so curious-like, it didn't seem as if it could be right."

"Yes, perfectly: that nice little boy, who used to come up weeding here! Well, what of him?"

"He has been living the last year as stable-boy at Mr. Wilson of Cwmtithy, and he has come home for Christmas; and he told me as how he had given warning to his master, as he didn't have enough wages; and he wanted to know if you would have him."

"I should like to have him in the place of Colly, who is obliged to leave, as he is ill. Walter," said Fanny, "he would do so well to look after my ponies. Will you see to it?"

"Yes, dearest, if you like. I will go him to-morrow."

"And, Miss Fanny, isn't it dreadful?" said Gwenny, coming in again with the urn. "Do you know as how Mr. Ledfir of Littlewood is in prison? They do say as how he will be transported!"

"For what, Gwenny?" said Fanny, turning with interest to her.

"And sure, haven't ye heard tell on it? Why, he cheated some one or other most awful—ruined them; forged, or something; and his poor wife is heart-broken, with two little children dependent on her."

"Poor thing!" sighed Fanny. And then, as Gwenny left the room, she turned to her father, wondering why he had never spoken of it.

She saw a look of pain crossing his face; and, leaning over him, asked what ailed him?"

"Shall I tell?" he asked of his wife.

"Yes," was the quiet answer.

"Then, my child, I will tell you," he said. "That forger is my dead sister's son; and the man who died last year, at the Lee Arms, was his father, and the one who ruined me."

"How dreadful!" said Fanny, with tears in her eyes; "but, dear papa, you forgive?"

"My child, I, who have so much need to be forgiven, can do no other than forgive those who injure me!"

"Dear papa!" said Fanny, bending down and kissing him.

"Hark!" said Mrs. Powell, "there is some one at the door. Didn't you hear that knock?"

"It must have been the wind. No one could be out such a night as this."

"Perhaps it may be some one to summon me to poor Mary Boles, who——"

A wild scream of joy from Gwenny in the hall interrupted Mr. Powell, and made Fanny run to the door to see what was the matter. As she opened it she ran against some one; and looking up she saw—was she dreaming?—she saw Harold standing in the doorway!

"Harold!" she cried.


"What!" said Mrs. Powell, starting up wildly: "what!"

"Mother! mother!" And a tall, bronzed man, caught her in his arms as she fell, half-fainting, forward.

How can I describe that meeting? Let my readers picture it to themselves: picture the joy, the bliss of that now unbroken circle.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Yes; it was true: the long-lost Harold had returned to gladden the hearts of his parents. He, who had so long been mourned for as dead, was before them; and they were resting their fond looks upon his handsome face, gazing at him with pride and affection—their well-loved, first-born son. And how had it come to pass that he was standing there, addressing them with his cheery, ringing voice, when they thought that voice was silent for ever? To tell you in his own words would take me too long; for there were so many interruptions, so many questions, so eagerly did all wish to listen to his adventures. Briefly it ran thus:—The good ship “Falmouth,” speeding on her way to Australia, one stormy night struck on a hidden rock. The water poured in, and all hands were set to work the pumps; but in vain—the vessel was sinking.



Some took to the boats, and were never heard of more: many, many were drowned, buffeting with the waves, and clinging in despair to the masts or spars. Harold, calm in danger, bound himself to a plank; and with two companions trusted himself, with prayers, to the raging deep. Morning dawned, and found them floating, floating away—whither? Alas! they could see no land: nothing but only the half-subsided waves, tossing wildly around them. A few biscuits and a keg of water were all they possessed. The third morning dawned, and the bright sun looked down on the floating plank, and saw two lifeless bodies stretched on it, and a wild, haggard man, praying for death. Dimmer grows the light in his eye; slower beats his pulse; a look of peace rests upon his brow; for he feels that he is drifting, drifting to a beautiful home, and on the shore is a loved form stretching her arms to him, and calling him to come. He wakes and finds himself lying in a cabin; kind faces are pressing eagerly around him, watching for the first symptom of life! He is saved! He found that he was rescued by the crew of a merchantman bound for Japan, and thither he went with them—almost out of heart at his prospects, for clothes, money, everything was gone! But

the blessing of God rested on him ; the prayer for his success had not been breathed in vain in the far-off mountain home. By the recommendation of the merchant captain, Harold entered the service of an English trader he met at Canton, at which port they touched. This trader, or rather tea-planter, lived far up in the country ; and from thence Harold addressed many letters to the loved ones at home, which never reached their destination. Gradually his employer took him into his confidence, and he was intrusted with many delicate commissions, for which his generous master amply rewarded him. In two years' time he was rich enough to take a tea plantation in Assam for himself. But he was by this time thoroughly uneasy at the long silence of those at home, and setting his affairs in order, he started for England, and arrived, as we have seen, quite unexpectedly. Perhaps there was another motive mixed with his wishes to meet again his beloved parents ; perhaps the thought that now he had a home to offer, that he was on the road to fortune, might have influenced him. Be it as it may, the first question he asked, after satisfying his eager listeners, was, "Is Beata married?" Fanny smiled archly at him, and answered in the negative.

Great was the joy of the villagers when told of Master Harold's return.

"And is it for good ye are come?" asked an old man.

"No, no!" was Harold's reply. "I am going away again very soon. I only returned to see my father and mother, and I expect I shall go back to Assam in a few months."

"Lor, dear heart!" said an aged woman near; "so ye have been to the bottom of the sea, Gwenny says. Wasn't it uncommon queer?"

"If I had been, Sally, I don't think you would ever have seen me again," said Harold, laughing; and then, in his kindly manner, he told the history of his preservation to the rustic group around him. And Master Harold became a hero in the eyes of the simple villagers.

"My boy," said Mr. Powell, laying his hand tremulously on his son's shoulder, "you will not leave us again?"

"I must, indeed, father. What can I do in England? Perhaps in four or five years' time I shall be able to return, when I have gained enough to enable us all to live in ease and plenty; for, father, the vow I made long ago must not be broken!"


"My son, you are right; yet still I cannot but wish that it had been otherwise."

“Nay, father, let us not think that. Whatever is, is, I am sure, for the best!”

“It is well!” said the old man, leaning back in his chair; and his eye fell on a slender figure speeding away down the hill. It was Fanny. Whither was she going?

A woman sat in a desolate parlour; the fire smouldering in the grate; the empty room, bereft of every vestige of furniture, with the exception of a table and two chairs: above all, the woman who sat there with her head resting on her hands, looking out with the stony, glassy look of despair on the wild, lonely country, struck sorrow to the heart. The house echoed to the tramp of men’s feet as they went from room to room numbering and preparing the things for the approaching sale. No one came near the unhappy creature, who had sat in the same position in the empty room since daybreak. The door opened, and a woman’s form stole gently in and laid a kind hand on the shoulder of the unhappy one. She turned and looked at her, and then shook her hand off passionately.

“Why do you come here? Is it to taunt me, and to give me your pity? I tell you I don’t want it. *You* might have been in my position now, only he wouldn’t have you! Yes,



you! you who are now standing looking at me, pretending to pity me, when you know you rejoice! Go away! I don't want you to see my misery."

"Indeed, I pity you," said Fanny, with a look of pain crossing her face at the unjust speech of the other. "But if you will not let me pity you, at least let me help you."

"I don't want your help," was the surly answer. "All I want now is death—yes, death!" she echoed wildly; "and here it is to be found," drawing a small phial from her pocket. "Yes, yes! so you see I don't want your hateful pity; those who are rich and prosperous can afford it, but we poor ones, we won't take it!—we won't take it!"

It was dreadful to hear the poor creature talk so wildly; but Fanny's heart was too tender to leave her without trying to give some comfort, so she knelt down beside her, and taking her hands within her own, made her look at her while she spoke.

"You must not talk like that, Mrs. Ledfir; you know it is wicked. For what motive think you I am here? You tell me it is to taunt you. Hush! you don't know what you are throwing from you. Will you not receive a woman's pity and love? I am willing to

give both. I have had trouble, Mrs. Ledfir—bitter trials—which I could not have borne had I depended on my own strength. Ask Him to give His grace to you, and not talk of destroying the life that He gave you for some good purpose. Besides, though we cannot always see it, every trial is sent for our good; to bring us near to Him who died for us; to make us more fit for a home above, where sorrow never enters.”

* * * *

The wintry sun streamed through the curtainless windows and fell on the forms of two women, who, with clasped hands and uplifted faces, were praying.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BEATA LENNOX was very busy on the 6th day of the new year ; for there was to be a large party in the evening, and she was assisting to prepare for the expected guests. The carpet in the drawing-room was taken up for dancing, and she and a servant were arranging the furniture round the room. Her three tall brothers came in and out ; now with pretty sprays of shining holly for the vases, or to replenish the Christmas decorations ; now with a willing hand to help their sister, but ever bringing with them that freshness and buoyancy that seemed their atmosphere, so bright and merry were they.

“ Look your best, sister mine ! ” said Harry, who was still as ever the joy of Beata’s heart. “ Who knows whom you will captivate to-night ? ”

“ Nobody worth the trouble, I am sure,” laughed Beata. “ But I am looking forward

to a jolly evening. I don't know why, but I am sure I shall enjoy myself; at any rate I am determined to be as merry as—as you, *Enrico mio*."

"That's an implied compliment, sissy, and I feel quite flattered," he returned, gaily. "But the *mater* wants me to go a message for her, and here am I standing idly, chatting as if I had nothing to do. *Au revoir*." And he walked out, whistling a bar of a popular melody.

Beata, having finished arranging the furniture, next turned her attention to the vases on the mantel-piece, filling them prettily with holly and greenhouse flowers. While thus engaged, the door opened, and the old butler entered.

"Please, Miss Beata, will you go into the dining-room; there's a gentleman which has come, and missis is too busy to go to him, so told me to ask you to go."

"Who is it, John?" she asked, glancing at herself in the glass, and thinking she looked rough and untidy. "Who is it? for I am hardly fit to see any one."

"Oh! I expects, miss, it is Mr. Mullinrow, as master said was coming to-day. Leastways, he is some one from foreign parts."

"Ah, well," was the answer, "I suppose

I must go !” and smoothing her dark hair with her hands, she entered the room.

A tall form was standing at the window, looking out on the pretty lawn and the silent flowing river, but he turned when she approached and sprang towards her.

“Beata ! Beata !” said a voice that she had listened to and loved long ago, deeper in tone, but as full of love and tenderness, as when last she heard it. Was she mistaken ? Could it, could it be he ? And she stood looking at him, with her hands clasped nervously together, hardly knowing what she was doing, or whether she was dreaming. But this kind of stupor was broken by her companion taking her hands in his, and again calling her by name. “Beata ! dear Beata ! don’t you know me ?” And then she looked again at him, and saw in the sunburnt face and laughing blue eyes—saw there the Harold she had loved ; he whom she still kept in her heart of hearts ; for whose dear memory she was still unmarried ! and with a cry of joy she sank on a chair and covered her face with her hands. “You know me now ?” he said, bending tenderly over her.

“Yes, yes ! But I can hardly believe my eyes ; we thought you were drowned in the wreck of the ‘Falmouth,’” she answered.

"As if by a miracle I was saved; and it appears my letters were all lost, so that you have believed me dead. I only returned on the 1st, and hastened down here to see you. I would not let Fanny write and tell you of my arrival, as I wanted to surprise you."

She blushed, and said, "I must call mamma; she will be so pleased to see you."

Just at this moment Mrs. Lennox entered, and gave the new-comer a hearty welcome. Later in the day, when all had somewhat recovered from their surprise and delight, Harold entered the drawing-room, and was soon joined by Beata, dressed for the evening. She looked very pretty: her dark hair was beautifully braided, and a spray of holly, with its glistening rich leaves and bright berries, twined carelessly in it. She looked so happy; the pensive expression had passed from her face, and instead there lingered a look of peaceful content.

"Is Fanny well?" she asked, as she seated herself beside him at the fire. "We have been so busy talking, I have not had an opportunity of inquiring before for her."

"She is very well, and seems very happy," was the answer. "I am truly thankful she is so well provided for. But how much seems to

have transpired during my absence! I half expected to find you married, Beata!"

She laughed and said, "Not very likely!" and then they were silent.

Presently he took her hand, and said, "Do you remember that pretty quotation from *Evangeline*, 'If we love one another, nothing in truth can harm us, whatever mischances may happen?' And it has come true, has it not? and the mischances were ordered by a wise hand."

"Yes; I am sure of it: as Fanny says, 'there is a silver lining to every cloud.'"

"My darling!" he interrupted, passionately, "you know how I love you! You, Beata, have been my guiding star! Every night, before I laid down, there ascended up to the quiet heavens a prayer for you! I have waited long, dear one! do not let me have waited in vain. My darling! whisper only one little word—will you be my own dear wife?" She bent her head on his bosom, but did not answer; the words would not come; she was so happy—too happy to speak. He drew her closer to him, and kissed her tenderly. "Fanny told me," he said, after a pause, "that for my sake you did not marry."

"How could I," she answered, "when m

heart was with you? Oh! Harold, that was a dreadful time when my heart died within me, and I could only think of the agony—the life-long agony—of living without hope.”

“My darling!” he replied, “I know it must have been a trial. I know what misgivings I suffered on your account. I thought of speaking before I left England, but it was all so hurried at the last; and, besides, I did not like to bind you. The last few years have been so full of trials to us all, but the daylight is brighter after the night!”

“Yes, sorrow is like the rain, that makes the flowers and trees look bright and beautiful after all the heat and drought. It must have been a great trouble to you,” she continued, “to lose everything at the wreck. You must have felt so desolate!”

“Yes, I did indeed! But I had an object, and so I worked and worked till that object was gained. There is a verse I often thought of when toiling and working in that distant land—it is by Ampere:—

‘ Marche d’un pas plus ferme, au vrai but de ta vie,
Travaille, souffre, attends ton heur doit venir ;
A travers les écueils, à travers les orages,
Dirige toi, vers ce but de tes jours :
Que ton ceil, soit serein, ou chargé de nuages,
Marche à ton but, marche toujours.’ ”


"It is well," said Beata, when he had concluded, "to have an object, or one's life becomes purposeless: of course, every one has an object, *un but*, if he would but seek for it. I know well that yours was one worthy of you."

"It could not be wrong, my darling, I think," was the answer; "it was, as you know, to retrieve my father's fallen fortune,—and God has helped me, I feel, for He has prospered all my undertakings."

A light step was heard in the hall, and Harry entered, exclaiming,—

"Well, Powell, you are like Othello relating his adventures to Desdemona. I sincerely hope I am not intruding."

"Oh, no," said Harold, laughing; and then they entered into conversation till the arrival of the guests. What a joyous, merry evening that was! How fast the hours slipped by in dancing and music! Harold declared he could not dance, but nevertheless managed to get on very well with Beata, who said, merrily, that he must have practised with the Chinese ladies, as he had not forgotten any of his steps. And so the morning broke at length, and one by one, as the guests departed, they



agreed that he who was the lion of the evening, the shipwrecked hero, was the nicest young man that had stayed in Monckton for years ; — at least, such was the opinion of the young ladies.

CHAPTER XXX.

GREAT was the delight of every one on hearing of Beata's engagement. Her father gave a ready consent; her mother alone demurred, on account of her child leaving her for that far-off land. But seeing that Beata's happiness so much depended on her acquiescence, she cheerfully gave it, and more willingly, as she felt that the one her daughter had chosen was worthy of her in every respect; and so the wedding-day was fixed for the beginning of April.

"How glad I am!" said the old man, looking up from his son's letter.


"Yes; for Beata is a dear child, and will make him a good wife," said the mother, perhaps inwardly thinking that Harold's clothes would be better looked after for the future.

"Dear Beata! I was certain of it," said Fanny, looking smilingly at her husband.

"Yes, you prophesied it, I remember; but then, I think, any one not quite blind could have seen it."

"Now, don't try and take me down, Mr. Walter, for I can assure you I will not stand it," was the laughing reply.

That was the way in which the news was received at Penland; so Beata may be assured that she will be welcomed with outstretched arms by Harold's family. And on a pleasant spring morning, Harold and Beata plighted their troth in the old abbey church; the bright sun streamed through the east window, and lighted up their earnest faces as they knelt at the altar; and the soft wind, full of the breath of spring flowers, bore their vows to heaven, and registered them there: and those two are one, "till death them do part." It was not a merry wedding, for all sorrowed at the idea of the good genius of the house, the gentle sister and dutiful child, leaving her childhood's home—it may be, for ever. One short month, and Harold and Beata would be away on the blue sea, bound for their Indian home. A short trip to Weymouth, and then they journey to Wales to bid adieu to their parents. And how the bride is welcomed and loved! how many injunctions the old man



gives his son to guard well the delicate flower he has gathered ;—small need, though, to do it, for Harold fondly and tenderly loves his young wife, believing firmly that she has not her equal. Next to her, ranks his sister in his opinion. “She is very noble, is she not?” he asked of his wife, one evening, as they sat by the open window, looking at the pretty group assembled on the lawn — the young mother tossing her child high in the air, while he chuckled with baby glee ; and the father, standing behind, his arm resting on the rustic seat, looking with pride and delight at his treasures. “She is very noble and high-minded ; I am very proud of her. I had no idea, darling, that there was such a spirit of endurance in her.”

“Ah !” said Beata, “few know what they are capable of. I have heard people say, that virtue is not virtue until it has been tried ; but I am sure she has been tried enough ; and yet, how grandly she has come out of the furnace of affliction !”

“Such a light-hearted, merry being ! How strange it is that she has such a deep well of feeling beneath that exterior !”

“Well, dear, you know ‘men are not always what they seem ;’ but I always felt sure that


there was more feeling and thought in her than she let appear to the world. I must say that I do admire and love her very much."

"And you, sweet one! do you think that sorrow has done nothing for you?"

"Yes, Harold;" and she laid her hand tenderly on his shoulder. "Yes, sorrow is never sent without a purpose; our Heavenly Father doth not willingly afflict the children of men, but rather, like a wise and loving father, corrects us for our good; to try our faith, to bring us nearer to Him—to make us better, holier, and more humble.

"Yes," said a quiet voice behind, "in every picture there is shadow, so as to make the light brighter; in every sky some little clouds are sailing; in every landscape sunshine and shadow, to make it more beautiful; and so in life, sunshine and cloud, too: but how small the shadows are in comparison with the sunshine that He sends us so bountifully!"

And Harold turned, and looked at the speaker,—looked at her full blue eye, and broad, peaceful brow, with the pretty hair rippling round it, and felt that the shadows of her young life had been sent wisely; felt that the sister who had suffered and borne up so



bravely was far dearer to him than the light-hearted one of other days, who had never known a sorrow or care.

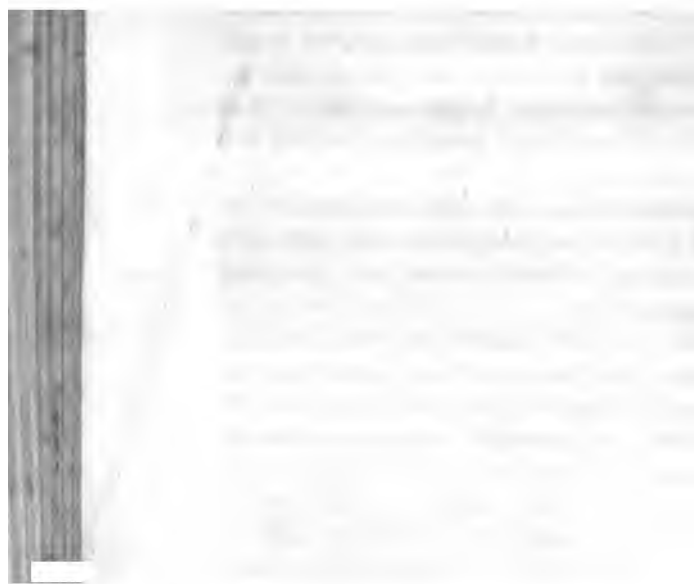
“Yes,” he answered, repeating her words, “how small the shadows are in comparison ! And if none ever crossed our path, we should never long for the land where no shadows are—where it is always bright and fair. ‘And there shall be no night there, for the Lord God giveth them light.’”

And the old man, who had entered the room, placed his hand on Fanny’s shoulder, and while the moonlight fell on his calm, holy face, said, impressively,—

“‘My children, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him ; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.’”

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